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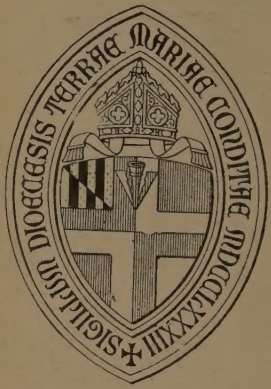

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to Wm L. Glenn

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SERMONS

ON

THE APOCALYPSE.

Mary Glenn

THREE GROUPS

OF

SERMONS

ON

1. PORTIONS OF THE APOCALYPSE;
2. THE HOLY NAME;
3. THE LAST CHAPTER OF PROVERBS.

PREACHED IN

THE ORATORY OF S. MARGARET'S,
EAST GRINSTED,

BY THE

REV. JOHN MASON NEALE, D.D.

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TO

ELIZABETH PHELPS,

THEIR OWN AND THEIR FATHER'S FRIEND,

THE SISTERS OF S. MARGARET'S

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBE THIS BOOK.

East Grinsted,
S. Margaret's Day, 1871.

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PREFACE.

FEW words of preface are needed for this volume. It contains, as its title states, groups, not perfect sets, of Sermons on three subjects. Those on the Apocalypse and the Virtuous Woman were partly preached in regular course: those on the Holy Name, at many different times. The latter have been gathered together here, because the subject has a peculiar interest for all persons connected with this Sisterhood; and the Litany, daily used by all its members, and frequently alluded to in these Sermons, is appended to them.

The principle which actuates the Sisters of S. Margaret's in editing their Founder's works, was sufficiently set forth in the Preface to "Sermons on the Psalms;" and, while they regret

the almost necessary imperfection of posthumous publications, they trust that this little book may not prove useless or uninteresting to those for whose use it is offered.

SERMON I.*

I HAVE THIS AGAINST THEE.

"*I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have* somewhat *against thee because thou hast left thy first love.*"—Rev. ii. 2, 4.

First of all, let me show you how one little word will alter the force of a whole sentence. This verse, so infinitely precious as a warning, has been, by the insertion of that one word, turned almost into a palliation of deep, deep sin. Those who read the English Bible alone, without commentators, and without help, can hardly understand the text otherwise than thus: First, the glorious catalogue of graces; then:—still, it is not *quite* perfect: there *is* a defect, a *little* defect,—a *somewhat:* "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast

* Fragment of a Sermon preached on the Festival of the Holy Name, 1863, at the reception of a novice.

left thy first love." And thence men have gone on still further: that, if this Church, this glorious Church of Ephesus, lost its first love, all followers of the LORD also must do so.

But now see. That word *somewhat* is in italics. My Sisters, the first opportunity you have, cross it out of your Bibles. A most unhappy, a most dreadful filling up. This is the true sense. All the dear graces are first reckoned up to the honour of the Church of Ephesus: endurance, and patience, and for His Name's sake (the Name of this day) labouring, and not fainting. "Nevertheless," our dear LORD goes on, "I have THIS against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

And now first see how much we learn by comparing Ephesus with Thyatira.

Ephesus clung to the faith; hating apostates and heretics; the LORD says, "How thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." But then, this great, this overpowering accusation, "Thou hast left thy first love."

Thyatira had the opposite sin. She suffered that woman Jezebel which calleth herself a prophetess; but she loved, and she showed her love by her works: and the last, He, that knoweth all things, knew to be more than the

first. On the one side, faith, with decreasing love; on the other, increasing love, with more cowardly faith.

My Sisters, you see why I have taken this text. I had to say something of the Name above every name. I had also to say something of the love of a new Sister. "For My Name's sake thou hast laboured, and hast not fainted." And then, and yet: "*because* thou hast left thy first love."

Believe me, my Sisters, in what I am about to say to you now, I merely am putting into English words, and realizing in our own great need, what those Saints, whom GOD gave in such love to the world, have taught me.

Now, what is the loss of first love?

There is the very frequent mistake. The love, the true, deep, quiet love, beginning indeed at the beginning, but to remain for ever, is confused with excitement. See. When a deep, deep sinner turns again to GOD, when the poor sheep tries to come back to the sheep-fold, and the LORD of the faltering and fallen takes pity on him: that is, (to use in its true sense the term which has been so perverted that it has been hated,) when a man is converted: then, there is a certain glow and excitement of feeling, almost necessary, certainly happy, which can-

not last. So again: (and, my Sisters, this may contain something of importance as regards you,) you, one by one, have been received, as our dear future Sister hopes to be received to-morrow. What you felt, in the way of excitement, when you took those vows, cannot last. THAT is not first love. No; but this I do hope, this I do believe: that for your LORD'S sake you really, if the point came to the point, would do more for Him now than then, though you might, in one sense, have felt more then than now.

Oh, my Sisters! see what follows. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works."

Now; do you think I speak to you, as if you were in the position of Ephesus? This I know: that we, Priest and Sisters, must every moment be on our guard lest it should be so. There is a terrible lesson in that Book of Revelation, taken in connection with the Epistles, which shows what the Priest has to do with the question.

Listen, my Sisters, to a warning to me first. The history is very remarkable.

There were two cities near to each other in Asia Minor: Colosse and Laodicea. When S. Paul was in those parts, he founded, his

Master helping him, a Church in each. In Colosse, there was a leading Christian, by name Philemon, who had a runaway slave, called Onesimus. S. Paul interceded, oh how lovingly! "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides." In writing to this Philemon, we find S. Paul's love sent to Archippus, one of his family. Then, when the same Apostle writes to the Colossians, there is a reproof, so it would seem, to this Archippus. And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the LORD, that thou fulfil it." And then, lastly, that Laodicea, with its idle Bishop: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot."

* * * * *

[*The MS. breaks off; but the idea carried out was that of Archippus, the beloved of Paul, gradually falling from grace, till, as Bishop of Laodicea, our* LORD'S *most awful words were spoken of him.*]

SERMON II.*

HAVING DONE ALL, TO STAND.

"*I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.*"—REV. ii. 13.

THAT first clause,—"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is,"—would it lead us to think that there was the loving message for this poor afflicted Church of Pergamos (or, as it should rather be, Pergamum), which we really know is to follow? One thing I should take for certain. The works, known to GOD, done by one who dwelt where Satan's seat is, must be either illustriously good,—the bright candle in the night,—or deeply wicked,—the outer, double darkness. Well;—and these works are indeed worthy of everlasting remembrance; and see how that which enhanced them is mentioned twice

* Preached on Septuagesima Sunday, 1862.

over; "where Satan's seat is,"—"where Satan dwelleth."

But now, why could it be said that Satan dwelt in Pergamum more than in any other of the seven cities to whom S. John wrote? why that his seat was there? or rather his *throne;* for it is the same word with our English; and as, when applied to the Throne of GOD's glory, so it ought to be used of the hellish caricature of that Kingdom? It is absolutely unknown. And I think I can see the reason why it should be so. If we knew the peculiar temptation this Church had to conquer, we should perhaps sympathise less with the teaching for ourselves. Some great manifestation of Satan's power was exercised against Pergamum; some bitter temptation he either has bent, or does, or will direct against us. Pergamum conquered; and we shall see how; and by the same means, my Sisters, must we conquer.

Ah! and first we get the old story: the high road of suffering! Antipas was "My faithful martyr." Now, is it not most remarkable that this glorious title, *My martyr, My faithful martyr,* given to no other Saint, should not for ever have kept alive the memory of Antipas, what he did, how he suffered? And yet absolutely nothing is known of him. In the later

martyrologies, indeed, we have a long history of his passion; but clearly only as a legend, written by one who knew no more of the facts than ourselves. Now, if you like to take this as a proof that GOD's greatest Saints are often those of whom the world knows least,—so it undoubtedly is, and this may be another proof of it. But I am inclined to think that this is not the true explanation. I do not believe that Antipas was the name of any individual martyr. The word πᾶς in Greek means *every one*. As Antichrist, being interpreted, is He that resists CHRIST, so Antipas means He that resists every one; that is, who, simply, by himself, stands up against a world of evil-doers. Like those glorious verses about Abdiel, in the revolt of the Fallen Angels, which always stir my heart like a trumpet:

> "So spake the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found
> Among the faithless, faithful only he:
> Among innumerable false, unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
> His loyalty he kept, his faith, his zeal."

Antipas, then, in this sense, every martyr of every age has been and must be; and singularly enough, one such Martyr of Pergamum history tells us of. You have some of you read, and I hope all of you have heard of, the letter

written by the Church of Lyons in France to the Churches in Asia, seventy years later than the Epistle of S. John, concerning the glorious martyrs there in a local persecution; when the slave S. Blandina, being bound in a chain of red-hot iron, thence encouraged her fellow-sufferers to hold out; when the aged Bishop, S. Pothinus, died under the buffeting of the mob,—then one of the foremost soldiers in this brave fight, then one of the first athletes in this brave race, was Attalus, a Pergamene. I have seen the very dungeon in which they were confined; a dungeon to which you can only obtain access by crawling in like a worm.

Now then: how did this Church of Pergamum stand firm where Satan dwelt? Look at those two clauses; "And thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith." That is one of the texts that at first sight seem so disappointing in their conclusion. I have spoken to you before now of that in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day; and having done all,"—well, what? To win a complete victory? to crush down Satan utterly? Nothing less. Having done all, *to stand*. To hold your own,

and that all: the whole result, simply *not to yield*. And take another example. "Therefore seeing we have received this ministry,"—this ministry of binding and loosing,—this ministry according to the voice of which the Incarnate Word is given to us under the similitude of Bread and Wine,—this ministry of which He Himself is the Great High Priest,—seeing we have received this ministry,—and further, *as we have obtained mercy*,—now surely, it must be, we shall carry the whole world before us! And alas! it is only, *we faint not!* Not to faint, the highest results of the greatest gifts that God can bestow on man! And so here. "And thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith." Think first of that Name,—the only Name given under Heaven whereby one can be saved, the Name which has healed the sick, cast out devils, raised the dead, yes, and greater miracle still, turned stony hearts into hearts of flesh, warmed icy coldness into a fervour of love; that Name, like ointment poured forth; that Name, so sweet, so mighty, so exalted above every name; think first of that; and then of holding it fast; and what ought to be the strength of one who clings tight to the Tower of all strength. And then what a dis-

appointing conclusion, "And hast not denied My faith."

My Sisters, when I look at you, I can a little understand what this means. You go out, we will say, and do and suffer what you could not do nor suffer except by the power of that Name, which not only in your Litanies and your professions, but in your very hearts, you hold fast. You come home: and, by and by, some little temptation,—some word spoken unkindly in the common room, some piece of obedience taken amiss, some misunderstanding of some Sister,—and would you not be most joyful if you could always say that you had resisted a thing in itself so little? Would you not in your next self-examination feel as thankful, or more thankful, for victory over this very miserable little fox, as over the lion that roared against you before?

Yes; this I take to be the meaning of such apparently disappointing clauses. For the great work you put out all your energies, you employ all your watchfulness, you call into action all your prayers; and down go the walls of your spiritual Jericho. But then comes a poor little Ai; and the first thing is, "Make not all the people to labour thither, for they are but few;" and the next thing will be, "O LORD,

what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies?" No one, my Sisters, has greater need of this warning than (not you especially, but) all who have embraced the Religious Life; because the very height of its aim and enterprises seems to make little worldly, casual temptations small and contemptible; and the moment you think a temptation contemptible, Satan's victory is half won.

I was speaking to you the other day* of the promise made to this same Church,—of the white stone and the hidden manna. But it is worth while to notice, how the promise of the reward is peculiarly adapted to the self-denial by which the reward is won. It goes on to specify among the temptations of Pergamum, "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, to eat things sacrificed unto idols." That, then, is Satan's line: and our dear LORD'S reward is the hidden manna: is Himself, sacramentally eaten in this world by His faithful; but there, the even yet more precious, more glorious, more delicious manna of the Beatific Vision.

And then, to look back to the beginning of the text, what more solemn words can there

* See following Sermon.

be for you, than those four first? We know what has been said of your works in the assembly of the Church. But what, when the Head of the Church takes them into His own knowledge? "I know," not *your* works only, but "*thy* works:" each one: those secret, hidden things, all those tides and counter-tides of temptation and impulse, which she hardly knows herself, which she has not the power of expressing to an earthly Priest, no, not even if he were endowed to the very full with the power of laying open the soul that GOD gave to S. Francis de Sales, or to S. Vincent de Paul! I know; and not now only, not now first. Long ago,—so He might say to each of you,—I, on the watchtower of My Cross, knew them; knew them, when I was winning the power for thee to gain thy virtues, when I was suffering additionally for each of thy sins. I knew them; and I knew thee; knew with what strength or infirmity, with what faith or unbelief, with what courage or listlessness, thou wouldst cleave to My Name, thou wouldst keep My faith." And oh, my Sisters, think of that knowledge first; and then what becomes of every other opinion, of all other praise or blame!

"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest."

Ah! and what when the accomplished works are known, and known happily? "And where thou dwellest." Not now constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have an habitation among the tents of Kedar, but in one of the many mansions of our Father's House, whither our dear Lord hath gone before to prepare a place for us.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." And, thus called to look on the everlasting Alleluia of Heaven, we are reminded of the temporary Alleluia of earth, from which we are now, for a season, called to part. Some of you may hardly realize the intense, and, so to speak, personal feeling of affection with which the Saints of the middle ages regarded this dear word: how they bade it farewell as to a most beloved friend; how they counted the days of its absence, in yearning desire for its return. I will read you the old Spanish service: The Dismissal of the Alleluia. I can imagine some men calling it childish; but if so, it is glorious in its very childishness. And thus it runs. It was said at the First Vespers of the First Sunday in Lent. The Chapter was this:

Alleluia in Heaven and in earth; in Heaven it is perpetuated, on earth it is broken. There

in constancy; here in faith. There beatifically; here sorrowfully. There without vocal pronunciation here with terrestrial music. There by Angels; here by sinners. Grant, O LORD, that those whose ministry we endeavour ourselves to imitate, may be our happy companions in the eternal Alleluia.

℣ Thou shalt go, O Alleluia. Thou shalt have a prosperous journey, O Alleluia.

℟ And again with joy shalt thou return to us, O Alleluia.

℣ For in their hands they shall bear thee up, that thou dash not thy foot against a stone, O Alleluia.

℟ And again, &c.

℣ I will direct thy ways, O Alleluia.

℟ Thou shalt go out with joy, and be led forth with peace, O Alleluia.

℣ The mountains and the hills shall break forth before thee into singing, O Alleluia.

℟ And all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands, O Alleluia.

℣ There shall no evil happen unto thee, O Alleluia.

℟ Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling, O Alleluia.

So they sang their farewell. But whether our

Alleluia does return to us in safety, whether our Angels will bear it up in their hands, that it dash not its foot against a stone, *that* must depend on our real penitence in Lent. If no true *Kyrie Eleison*, then certainly no true *Alleluia Perenne* at last. My Sisters, as each Lent comes round, I am anxious more than I can tell you,—it may be, nervously anxious,—that *no* miserable deceit or effort of Satan may prevent you, each of you, entering on it as you ought. He has so many, many ways to hinder a good beginning. As in the case of Job, illness; some perplexity among one's friends; some difficulty in one's own confession; some unkindness among yourselves; some mistake made by your poor Priest. But let us all try to remember this: that *how* we enter that Porch of Easter is all in all to us: every commencement of Lent is the time when we ought to make up our minds to do better than ever before; and when you, dear Sisters, should now ask yourselves—and, depend upon it, I shall ask you—how far you think you have given reasonable (ah me! or even unreasonable) cause of offence to others.

Why? That our Alleluia may come back to us unharmed, brighter, dearer, happier, now. Why? That we may one day, in that eternal

Easter, in that perpetual spring, merit to attain that, of which the highest strains of the Church Militant are but the poorest, meanest shadows, the everlasting Alleluia of Paradise!

And now, &c.

SERMON III.*

THE WHITE STONE.

"*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*"—Rev. ii. 17.

It is almost strange that I should not have spoken to you oftener about these Seven Epistles of our dear Lord Himself: answering, as they do, to the Seven Petitions of His Prayer, and the Seven Beatitudes of His Sermon. To the two Churches of whom nothing but praise is said: Smyrna and Philadelphia; the two who meet with nothing but blame: Sardis and Laodicea; and the three in whom praise and blame are nearly equally mixed: Thyatira, Ephesus, Pergamus.

I suppose it is hardly possible to find too

* Written for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, 1862; the Priest unable to be present.

deep a mystery, not only in the number, seven, but in the order in which they are arranged, and in the different promises made to each, as connected with the varying trials of each.

See, for example, how to the first Church, Ephesus, the promise is: "The Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of GOD." There we are carried back to the happy beginning of the world, and the Garden of Eden. To the second Church, Thyatira, the promise is: "Not to be hurt of the Second Death." And there we are carried back to the Fall, when the sentence of that Second Death was due to the sin of Adam. In the third Church, we read of certain that hold the doctrine of Balaam: and there we are taken to the children of Israel in the wilderness; also we read of the manna,—the hidden manna: hidden, namely, as that was which was laid up in the ark; still referring to the same time. In the fourth Church, Thyatira, we read of the prophetess Jezebel: and so we have the children of Israel in the land of Canaan. What follows, leaves off speaking of the Church on earth, and has to do only and wholly with that Jerusalem which is free, in Heaven. Is it not marvellous to see how the order of the history in the Old Testa-

ment forms also the order of the promises and threatenings in these Epistles?

Now something else. I have often enough spoken to you, my Sisters, of the trials and temptations you all must have; as things not to be frightened about, not to murmur at, not to think any proof that we are losing ground; but, whether we can realize them so or not, as blessings.

In these Seven Churches, there are two who have no exhortation to fight valiantly, and to suffer bravely. Are these the two that we should wish to be like? They are the two fallen ones: Sardis and Laodicea. To the one it is said: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead;" to the other: "I will spue thee out of My Mouth." This is what comes, my Sisters, of having no trials: of settling, as the Prophet says, on our lees. Whereas those glorious Churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia, how are they spoken of? "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." And again: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour

of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

But now to come to the text: and a very difficult one it is to understand. First: let us read once more the clause I am about to speak of: "And will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*."

The first thing to be remarked in that clause, is: "Which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*." Receiveth *it:* that is, the stone; not the Name. It is not that he that has overcome has here the promise of himself receiving a new name on his white stone; but, as we shall see presently, a far higher Name than that of any Saint.

Now, many mediæval writers have said, that the white stone refers to the Greek custom of marking happy days by throwing a white stone into a box: unhappy days by throwing in a black stone; and according as, at the end of the year, the black or the white were most numerous, so was the year considered happy or unhappy. So, they say, a white stone means the one long, endless glad day of eternity. But there is this fatal objection. S. John nowhere in the whole of his writings draws a metaphor from heathen games or customs. It was not

so with S. Paul; he, as you all know, is constantly alluding to them. "If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?" "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." But S. John, brought up in Judæa, where such games were never exhibited, never refers to them or to their prizes. I know you will say immediately: He does *once* at least, in that vision of the "great multitude which no man could number, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands:" and the palm was the Greek symbol of victory. Ah! but those happy palmers do not hold the palm in that they have conquered, but in that they rest: in that they are now keeping the true and everlasting Feast of Tabernacles: as it is written: "The Tabernacle of GOD is with men, and He will dwell with them." They rest from their labours: therefore the palms; they rest, when the true jubilee, the year of perfect remission is fulfilled; just as it was fifty days after the passage of the Red Sea that the Church of Israel pitched before Mount Sinai.

Well then: what other meaning for this white

stone? Now I showed you that all the promises to the Seven Churches, have reference to some special period of the history of the Church of Israel. This then has, too; and as we read in the same verse about the hidden manna, so it must have something to do with the time when they were in the wilderness.

Next, the word here translated *stone* may just as well mean *gem;* and *white* is more than merely white; it is glistering or sparkling: but a white glistering gem is surely a diamond.

Now, for a moment, think of the Tabernacle service, and of the High Priest's vestments. The most famous of these, you know, was the breastplate. Attend now; for the whole point lies in what follows. The breastplate was a piece of linen, exactly twice as long as it was broad. Folded in the middle, then, it became square; the sides were sewn together; and it became a square bag. Now the Jews are agreed that, in this bag, the Urim and Thummim was kept. *Was* kept; for they were one and the same thing; and hence sometimes called Urim only. The two words by interpretation mean Light and Illumination. Whatever it was, it was something at which the High Priest, and he only, looked when consulting the oracle. And what was it?

There is a very old tradition that it was a stone on which the incommunicable Name of God—JEHOVAH—was engraved. But what kind of stone?

On the outside of the breastplate were fastened twelve precious stones, the names of which you may read in Exodus. It is to be supposed that whatever was kept in the purse was more valuable than anything that formed the outside of the purse. Now,—most remarkably,—among the twelve stones, the diamond is not mentioned: although the Jews were very well acquainted with it. Urim and Thummim, then, was probably a peerless diamond, engraved with Jehovah's Name.

And now, my Sisters, do you see how beautifully the two work in together? It is the great promise to him that overcometh, that he shall be made, in the highest and most glorious sense, a Priest in that Heavenly Temple where is the Beatific Vision. If any, under the old law, should be privileged to eat of the hidden manna, the manna laid up in the golden pot within the ark, who but the High Priest, that alone knew where it was concealed? If any should be able to read what was written on the Urim, who but the same High Priest, that alone knew what it was, and by his very office was bound to consult it?

And thus, my Sisters, we unravel the mystery, and find how dear a promise for all of you! Only, whose name will now be written on that diamond of eternal blessedness, the reward of every conqueror, the special reward of those that have come out of harder fights? Our LORD tells you Himself in another place: "I will write upon him My New Name." See: where the Cross hangs on your breast now, the diamond will hang then. The Name written on the Cross is JESUS of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. But what will be written on the Diamond for Him that is King of kings, and LORD of lords? Earthly knowledge cannot reach so high: "No man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." Whenever you are, as S. Paul says, wearied and faint in your minds, whatever be the cause,—in yourselves, or from others, temptation, or mere sorrow, matters little or great,—remember those two Churches which alone were without the struggle, and to whom those lips that spake so lovingly to the rest, spoke so fearfully here. Remember also; that all the other Churches had heresy fighting against them in some form or other: Ephesus, the Nicolaitanes; Smyrna, the Jews; Pergamos, Balaamites and Nicolaitanes; Thyatira, "that woman Jezebel;" Philadelphia, the Jews

again. But the two fallen Churches had no such enemy. Satan left them to themselves; why should he thus vex and annoy those who were falling into the sleep of death? Why should he tempt any one of you, my Sisters, unless he feared you?

Yes: I know not where you could, any of you, look for greater comfort (and greater warning, too,) than in those Seven Letters. I often think how each of their Angels must have trembled when he opened the epistle that contained his own and his people's character in the eyes of GOD,—a sentence which could not be mistaken; a judgment from which there could be no appeal,—the award of Him Who is the Faithful and True Witness. I often think also, how we should feel, if, as miraculously, such an epistle were now to reach each English Sisterhood. Think of the fear and trembling with which we should open that missive; with which we should know how the Bridegroom of the Virgins at this moment regards us. Would it be: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, AND ART DEAD?" Would it be: "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength?" Would it be: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or

hot?" Or would it be: "I know thy faith, and patience, and works, and the last to be more than the first?" Who can tell us? And how little our own judgment can decide! But of one thing I am certain; let the message begin as lovingly and tenderly as it might, before the close there would certainly be, "notwithstanding I have somewhat against thee." What those *somewhats* are, my Sisters, may that dear LORD give us grace to see day by day more clearly in each of ourselves, and in all of us together! There they are among us now,—many things of which we know, many things probably that we know not,—there they are, set by Satan there to take away our Crown; permitted by GOD there, as the remnant of the Canaanites among the children of Israel, to prove us. To prove us here; and that hereafter we may inherit the sevenfold glorious promises: the Tree of Life, the Crown of Life, the White Stone, the Morning Star, to be clothed in glistering raiment, to be made a pillar in the Temple of GOD, and to sit down with the LORD in His Throne, the sevenfold glorious promises to "him that overcometh."

And now, &c.

SERMON IV.

SEVEN.

"*And unto the angel of the Church in Sardis write: These things saith He that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead.*"—REV. iii. 1.

I THINK of all fearful passages in Holy Scripture, the epistles to the Churches of Sardis and Laodicea are the most fearful. And that, more especially if taken in connection with a Religious House. And of the two, notwithstanding the few names in Sardis which had not defiled their garments, it seems to me that that Epistle is the more dreadful. For of Laodicea, though we know how wretchedly she deceived herself, thinking herself rich when she was most poor, having need of nothing when she was most miserable, yet we have no reason to believe that she deceived other Churches. Sardis did, it is plain, from this very verse;

she was looked on as a model Church; no doubt prided herself, and was envied by others, for her spiritual endowments, gift of tongues, and the like. Imagine, then, how like a thunderbolt it must have fallen upon them, when they came together on the Sunday that followed the receipt of this epistle, and the Bishop read the words of Him that cannot be deceived and cannot err, for His own most terrible condemnation and theirs: "Thou hast a name that Thou livest, and art dead."

But, before I go on to speak of that: first, of the LORD'S title. You must all have noticed how the number seven recurs and recurs in the Apocalypse. The seven candlesticks, the seven lamps of fire, the seven seals; seven horns and eyes of the Lamb; seven angels and seven trumpets; seven seals; seven thunders; seven heads of the dragon: seven crowns on those heads; seven heads of the Wild Beast; seven mountains; seven kings; sevenfold ascription of praise: seven invitations to *Come*; and the division of the whole book into seven visions.

Now, then, what is the reason of the especial holiness of the number seven? And if it takes me longer to speak about than I at first intended, that cannot be a matter of small import-

ance to us which runs, like a golden thread, through the whole texture of Scripture.

What especially does seven mean? It means, and it is, the sign of God's covenant relation to man, and especially to His Church, Jewish or Gentile.

From the beginning it was so. The seventh day hallowed; circumcision, its initiating sacrament; after seven days, the dove let loose. Seven is the number of sacrifice; that of the offering, in consequence of the covenant; Hezekiah, in reconciling the temple, brings seven bullocks, seven rams, seven lambs, seven he-goats; Job's friends are commanded to offer seven bullocks and seven rams; Balaam bids Balak build seven altars, and offer on each a bullock and a ram. It is the number of purification and consecration: in the sin-offering for ignorance, the Priest is to sprinkle the blood of the bullock seven times before the rail; in the consecration of Aaron the altar was sprinkled seven times with oil; the cleansed leper was sprinkled seven times with blood and water, and on the seventh day thereafter shaved his head and was clean; on the great day of atonement, the mercy-seat was sprinkled seven times. It is the number of forgiveness; "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until

seventy times seven: If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." Seven is the number of every grace and blessing flowing to Israel out of the covenant; and by this very number, therefore, shown to be in consequence of it. The Priests compass Jericho seven days, and on the seventh day seven times: "The LORD shall cause thine enemies to be smitten: They shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways:" "So that the barren hath borne seven:" "A just man falleth seven times a day, and riseth again." So it is the number of punishment to those that rebel against the covenant. "If ye walk contrary unto Me, and will not hearken unto Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins:" "Shall seven years of famine come into thy land?" It is the number of punishment of such as injure the people in it. "Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold:" "If Cain be avenged sevenfold, truely Lamech seventy and sevenfold." "For the blasphemy wherewith our neighbours have blasphemed Thee, reward Thou them, O LORD, sevenfold into their bosom." "Seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river." And

again, it is the number of punishment taken as a salutary discipline, and so re-adjusting, so to speak, the covenant between GOD and the sinner. "If the thief be found, he shall restore sevenfold." So the wise man says: "My son, sow not upon the furrows of unrighteousness, and thou shalt not reap them sevenfold. "And so again: "Such things (that is, earthly suffering,) happen unto all flesh, and that is sevenfold more upon sinners." All festivals, again the signs of the covenant between GOD and man, are ordered by seven; or else by seven multiplied by seven. So, not to mention the Sabbath again, so it is with the Queen of Jewish Feasts, the Passover,—the Feast of Weeks, of Tabernacles,—the Sabbatical Year, and the Jubilee.

Now further: when GOD is at work among the Gentiles outside the covenant: while yet it is clearly to appear that it is for the sake of Israel that He does so work, then comes in the number seven again. Thus it is the number of the years of plenty and famine: in sign that these were sent not so much for Egypt's sake as for Israel's. Naaman is to wash in Jordan seven times, that he may confess that there is no GOD in all the earth, but in Israel. Seven times pass over Nebuchadnezzar, that he may

learn how the God of the Jewish captives is King over all the earth. And I might go on almost endlessly. Who would venture to call it, as men speak, chance, that there are seven Beatitudes, seven clauses in the Lord's Prayer, seven parables concerning the Church, that the Lord spake seven words from the Cross: that He addressed the woman of Samaria seven several times: and when, in the seventh, He first proclaimed Himself the Messiah, He did it in seven words in Greek as well as in English. "I that speak unto thee am He?" And mark the analogy: the Priests went round Jericho on seven separate days: on the seventh day seven times: the great High Priest spoke seven sentences, and in the seventh uttered seven words: and lo, with His proclamation of Himself as the Messiah, the walls of the spiritual Jericho fall down flat: and, no longer, Rahab, but the woman, that, like Rahab, had been a sinner, was joined to the true Israel. And S. Matthew seems to ascribe such mystical virtue to this number, that he actually employs a certain violence to distribute the Lord's genealogy into three double sevens.

This thing then is certain: seven stands for the covenant relation of God with his people. Now, why?

And first notice: the number seven may be made up in three ways: $6 + 1$, or $5 + 2$, or $3 + 4$.

Now carefully observe; whenever it is divided at all in the Bible, it is always into $3 + 4$. I believe you cannot produce one single instance of either of the other distributions. In the Lord's Prayer: three petitions about the glory of God: (Hallowed be Thy Name: Thy Kingdom come: Thy Will be done:) four for the good of man. In the seven great parables of the Church: four spoken by the sea-side; then a pause; then three in the house. So in the Apocalypse, when four trumpets have sounded, it proceeds: "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, crying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels, which have yet to sound!" So in the vials: after the third, the angel of the waters speaks; and another angel answers: then come the other four. So, with regard to the seven Epistles: in the three first the exhortation to stand fast precedes, in the four last it follows, the promise to him that overcometh. In the seven Words, three are addressed to man: To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise; Woman, behold thy son; I

thirst; the other four to God, in marvellous analogy with the Lord's Prayer. So in the Beatitudes: four have to do with earth, three with heaven: namely, Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; Blessed are the pure in heart; Blessed are the peacemakers. And I might, and you may, largely go on.

Well then, have three and four any mystical meanings of their own? Most surely, yes. Three sets forth God: four, the world. These numbers, brought into contact and relation, express, in seven, the token of the covenant betwixt the two.

I need not show you that three is the number of God. But now about four. Not to speak of the four elements and the four seasons, which are not mentioned in Holy Scripture, we have the four winds. In Ezekiel: "Come from the four winds." In S. Matthew: "They shall gather together His elect from the four winds of heaven." In the Apocalypse: "Four angels standing on the four corners of the earth," holding the four winds of the earth. See in Revelation, the four Living Creatures, emblems of all-created life, and, in Ezekiel, with four faces and four wings; the four beasts in Daniel, lion, bear, leopard, and monster, representing the

four great world-powers successively to arise; the four metals in the great world-image; gold, silver, brass, iron; the same metals again when the offerings of regenerated earth are catalogued in Isaiah: "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron;" the four Gospels, type of the preaching through the whole world; the sheet S. Peter saw, knit at the four corners, full of all manner of beasts; the four horns in Zechariah, the sum total of all the world-powers as arrayed against the eternal; the four sore judgments in Ezekiel: sword, famine, evil beasts, pestilence; and compare that with S. John's vision, where power was given to the rider on the ghastly horse to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, (that is disease,) and with the beasts of the earth. The enumeration of diseases by S. John, "Impotent, blind, halt, withered;" and finally, the repeated enumeration of the inhabitants of the world, by "kindreds, and tongues, and people, and nations."

Thus you see how the world is reconciled to GOD in this most mysterious number; and what the GOD of Grace orders, the GOD of Nature typifies. What is the sign of the covenant between GOD and man but the rainbow with its seven colours?

I have been speaking to you for some time, and yet we have only gained the threshold of our text. That, with GOD's help, must be for this evening. And though what I have now been saying should seem less profitable to you than it might have been, if it only teaches us all, that, the more we search the Scriptures, the more exhaustless they are: that the outward first sense is like a rich wheat field in Australia, and that we must dig deep through that if we would get the nuggets of gold: if it helps to show us all in these days of blasphemy against the Word of GOD how marvellously infinite is the wisdom by which it hangs together, it will be enough.

And now, &c.

SERMON V.*

LISTLESSNESS.

"*Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*"—Rev. iii. 1.

It is not of this verse by itself that I am so much going to speak: but of it, as the Antiphon, so to say, to the whole Epistle; ay, and to that also to Laodicea. And nothing can concern us more nearly. Every Religious House, in these times at least, must have a name that it liveth. It must be, and is, so with you. Impossible that you should carry on the works you are carrying on, without others concluding at once that they must be done from the pure love of God, and in simple dependence on the Holy Ghost. But I wonder how we should feel if a direct message came to us from the Lord as it did to Sardis: with what terrible anxiety we should listen to it; the exquisite joy if it were—"Because thou hast kept the

* Preached Second Sunday after Epiphany, 1863.

word of My patience, I also will keep thee in the hour of temptation;" the misery, if we heard, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth;" the rapture of: "Thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted:" even though it were checked with: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee;" and, lastly, the almost despair of: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

Now before I go on notice this. Considering how common in the Apocalypse are plays upon words, it is very possible that the proper name of the Angel of the Church of Sardis had something to do with life: such as *Vitalis* in Latin; *Zosimus* in Greek. So the terrible irony as touching himself would be all the more bitter.

Now what strikes me first of all as the great characteristic in common of these two unhappy Churches, is the absence of all mention of external trouble, or inward temptation. Ephesus is vexed by Nicolaitanes; Smyrna shall have tribulation ten days; Pergamum is twice said to dwell "where Satan's throne is"; "where Satan dwelleth." Thyatira is tempted by "that woman Jezebel" to the lusts of the flesh; Philadelphia is harassed "by them of the synagogue of Satan,

which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie." But dead Sardis, and miserable Laodicea, have no fears, no trouble, no enemy. Satan knew too well to harass them. They were, as the Prophet says, settled upon their lees. Now, my Sisters, what is true of Churches is true of individuals. Therefore there may be comfort, or there may be warning here. Who would not rather be tempted with Philadelphia than have the peace of Sardis? And notice this. Next to Smyrna and Philadelphia, to whom not one word of blame is said, perhaps Thyatira comes highest: she whose last works and love were more than the first; that is a glorious advance. She it is who is attacked by the most loathsome temptation: that of "that woman Jezebel." Now, whether this really were the founder of a sect, or merely a personification of the Gnostics, still the trial to the Church was the same. They taught that it was a small thing for a man to despise the temptations of the flesh, if he fled from them and avoided them. No, they said: the true, the glorious victory was to remain superior to such pleasures while tasting them to the full; to give up the senses to all they could desire, while the spirit remained in a calm, pure region above them. This, they said, was

defying Satan in his own kingdom and stronghold.

And a masterpiece of Satan's that was: and thousands it drew away to hell. And, singularly enough, the very name, Jezebel, has an analogy with the teaching. We know, from the Old Testament, the kind of life she led; we know from other history that she, before her marriage with Ahab, was the priestess of Astarte, the Venus of the Zidonians, and yet her name is said, in the old Phœnician, to mean *pure;* just as Agnes in Greek.

And Smyrna again is tempted to open blasphemy: Smyrna, the spotless Church.

So, my Sisters, try to learn this. Temptations, let them be what they may, if only they are resisted, are the mark of growth: it is that terrible stagnation, when nothing has to be resisted, that all true servants of our dear LORD ought earnestly (His dearest servants *most* earnestly) to pray against.

Another thing to be observed. I have spoken so much and so lately about this, that I should not have entered into it again, had it not been there so plainly. Our LORD continues, about Sardis: "I have not found thy works perfect before GOD." Now *perfect* is not the right translation. It means literally, not having been

filled up to the brim; that is, not thorough. You know how small a thing this appears to us. I say *us*, because I am to blame in that sense as much as any of you. "*That will do.*" I doubt if that sentence has not done as much harm in the English language. That will just prevent open failure, and make the work keep on; the rest is useless labour. If I needlessly put off a Confession, because to-morrow will do as well; if I needlessly repeat what I have said before, instead of writing for you afresh, that is not *thorough*. If you,—but the rest I leave to your several consciences.

Well;—and as I said, *we* might think this,—a fault, certainly,—but see the judgment which He, the Most Merciful, as well as the Most Just, pronounces on it. This is the whole sum and substance of the sin; you heard the sentence before: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." This is only the declaration of the earthly, transfigured by the Heavenly Solomon: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy *might*."

My Sisters, if any of you feel in your heart of hearts that you have so offended, (and He that wrote these Apocalyptic Epistles only knows), we have not so long entered on the new year but that it is comparatively unspoiled ground. Begin again once more.

And, with respect to that, the threatening to the Laodiceans has much to do. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot." How are we to understand that? Better not love GOD at all than love Him half-heartedly? It is well to look at that: for there is certainly a difficulty; and three ways have been proposed of explaining it. The first would make it a mere expression of (as they say) holy impatience, against half-and-half love. Just as we say, when we object strongly to any measure, "Anything rather than that," meaning thereby, certainly not *anything;* but under very great limitation, and in a most confined sense. But, if we realize how completely these Epistles were the exact verbal words of our LORD to the Churches, we could hardly allow that He could so have spoken. For, of a perfect Being, it would not be a holy, but an unholy impatience. Then; another explanation: as food, if quite hot, or quite cold, is acceptable; but neither one nor the other, is to us disgusting; so the hot and the cold are, here, both good; only the lukewarm evil. But I suppose we all feel that such a low interpretation is utterly below the dignity of a common prophecy,—to say nothing of the especial glory of this book. No: the

cold, addressed to a Church, situated in the midst of a heathen country, signifies those who have never given ear to the True Faith; who have never received the Gospel: better heathen, unregenerate, than regenerate, lukewarm Christians.

Then, there is so very dear a thing in this Epistle. Sardis, at this time, was not only one of the most luxurious, but one of the most populous of the cities of Asia Minor. Notice then: our LORD will not allow the few names, insignificant in the eyes of the world though they might be, to think that they are overlooked by Him. And only a few *names*, rather than *a few?* Surely with reference to that Book of Life in which the names of all who have fought the fight well,—who have run the race well, are even now enrolled. But see how our LORD takes care that, even in that general condemnation, even when He so speaks of the Church as dead, He is careful that His own dear servants, few though they be, should feel that they are not overlooked by Him. It is the old story over again, "Wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five?" And the five, though they were not to be found, yet had they been found, would have been precious in the LORD'S sight.

And now remember, my Sisters, unless the

matter had been, as it were, so completely pressed on me, by a text which I took without the slightest reference to that, I would not have spoken to you about listlessness and the doing a thing without putting your whole heart and soul unto it. I told you just now how, if you fail in that respect, these Epistles pronounce a deeper condemnation than we might have expected: now, I remind you, how, if you succeed in what seems to be a little, trifling, insignificant thing, you will have your part in the blessing pronounced on those who have thus contended, and those who have thus conquered—(the Church that had *little* strength)—"Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy Crown."

And now, &c.

SERMON VI.*

A LITTLE STRENGTH.

"*I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength.*"—Rev. iii. 8.

I THINK, my dear Sisters, that you will all confess that part of this verse applies to each of you. "Thou hast a little strength." I am sure that you must all feel that some strength you have: that you are able to do some things which in the native weakness and infirmity of your nature you could never do: that some victories you obtain, which, if you went forth to the battle trusting in yourselves, you never could win; that if as yet you cannot do everything, at all events you can do much through CHRIST which strengtheneth you. And this I am sure you all know: that this strength is but a little strength; that when you would do good, evil is present with you: that in trying,—and

* Preached on the evening of the Twenty-sixth Sunday after Trinity, 1856.

you do try,—to conquer yourselves and your great enemy, you are often cast down and overcome.

Well then;—if this be so, the promise to the Church of Philadelphia must also hold good to you. "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

Now, to understand this promise, we must remember that in one sense an open door is set before every man, whether he be in earnest or not, whether hereafter he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven or not. But this is an especial blessing, and far beyond that: let us see what it means.

And I think you may judge for yourselves, by yourselves. You know that GOD has put it into your hearts to serve Him in a more especial and immediate way. He has given you, my dear Sisters, the resolution to give up everything else for His love. That, in your case, is the open door: and for your comfort it is written that no man can shut it. No *man?* No; nor any power of earth or of hell: that is your strength as well as your consolation.

An open door,—by which you are to enter into—what? And the answer is easy. What sort of lives—to view them as the world does—

all your future lives will be, I think you know. There is not one natural taste or feeling or wish that you will not, in turn, be called to give up. There is nothing that you must think too mean to do for our Lord's sake: there is nothing that you must think too difficult to do for His sake. You have all asked a hard thing; and a hard thing cannot be obtained in an easy manner. But then the promise goes on to assure you that there is no amount of self-denial too difficult for you to obtain; no service that you can render to God too difficult to be performed. No man *can* shut it.

And mind,—He does not say, No man will shut it; but no man can: can, that is, save by your own consent. That Satan will try again and again to shut it—that he will endeavour his very utmost to shake your resolution, to make you look back from the plough, to make you fainthearted in your own particular battle, I do not doubt. He has temptations enough: and he knows how to suit them to the particular mood of the moment. And of course, for it is only to be expected, he will, of all people, endeavour to attack you; because this is your very profession, your name, your glory, that you endeavour to attack him. And there are three ways by which he tries to shut this door.

Sometimes it is after the fashion of Judas: sometimes after that of the twelve spies: sometimes after that of the men sent to search out Ai. Sometimes it is,—"To what purpose is this waste? You are sacrificing time," strength, it may be life itself,—at all events everything that can make life dear or valuable; and why? why not be content to serve GOD as others? why choose out the roughest road, and take up the heaviest Cross? Then again,—he tries to close the door on you as the unfaithful spies endeavoured to close the entrance of Canaan on the children of Israel. "Surely the land floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong; we be not able to go up against them, for they are stronger than we." Or yet again, like those who went to spy out Ai,—who said, "Make not all the people to labour thither, for they are few." He would set before you that you may still lead this life, that you may still more especially serve GOD, without so much watchfulness, without so continual prayer, without obedience, without self-denial. Yes: he does indeed try to close that door of serving GOD: and your comfort must be in one word of the text. "*I* have set before thee an open door." "I, even I, am He that com-

forteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid?"

And see how the promise in the Revelation follows the praise given to the Church of Philadelphia. "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My Name. Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation." And, as you know, that has been marvellously fulfilled in the case of Philadelphia. This Church, that had a little strength,—this Church, the only one with which no fault is found,—this Church, which was to be guarded in the hour of temptation,—this Church, alone of the seven, Ephesus excepted, (and that scarcely excepted,) still exists. That "little strength" bears fruit still,—that little strength is still prevalent, nearly 1800 years after the Epistle was written. That open door never has been shut, never could be shut; in spite of persecution, and fire, and sword, and famine, it is open still.

And *your* little strength, my dearest Sisters, believe me, it is sufficient for anything, if you will only make good in yourselves the commendation of this Church. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience." It is a remarkable expression: not patience only, but *My* patience.

And what are we called to remember by that? My patience: when He endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself;—My patience: when He laboured so long, and apparently to so little effect:—My patience: when He was denied by His chief Apostle, betrayed by another, forsaken by all; My patience: when, in the very moment that He was taken by the soldiers, He said, "Suffer ye thus far;" My patience: when He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, when He hid not His face from shame and spitting.

"Ye have need of patience: that after ye have done the will of GOD, ye might inherit the promise." Because we are all for reversing that order: we want first to see the fulfilment of the promise, and then to perform the will of GOD. But it will not do: it is not GOD's order. I know how difficult it is: but then, if it *is* difficult, see what a glorious promise it has to its reward. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation." Ah, dearest Sisters, and it must be *My* patience in another sense too: not only a following of our dear LORD's patience, but a patience that none but He can give us. "My hour is not yet come, but your time is

alway ready": "LORD, wilt Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel? It is not for you to know the times and the seasons." That was His answer then: that is His answer to all such questions now.

"Thou hast a little strength." But it is written, "They shall go from strength to strength." Advent is drawing very near; and then it will be a time for you all to examine with all your strength and earnestness, whether this is so. And GOD grant that, in its fullest and deepest sense, the promise may be fulfilled to you. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience," I will keep thee from the hour of temptation,—that last and fiercest flood of temptations in the moment of death: that temptation which, once over, the very name of temptation can never so much as be heard again.

And now, &c.

SERMON VII.*

THE OPEN DOOR.

"*And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name.*"—Rev. iii. 7, 8.

Last Sunday we heard of those who, having a name to live, were dead: who thinking themselves to be rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing, knew not that in very deed they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Now let us hear of a Church, weak, despised, attacked, and yet gloriously to be kept in the hour of temptation.

And first notice, that when it is translated, "Thou hast a little strength," which would rather be an acknowledgment of power than of weakness, it ought to be, "Thou hast little

* Preached on the Conversion of S. Paul, 1863.

strength." All the more comforting, that, for those who feel that they have little strength, who doubt their own power to fight the long hard battle of a Religious Life, who tremble lest they should not persevere to the end. "My strength is made perfect in weakness."

You must join, my Sisters, the two verses together: "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it," with His title Who thus has opened it, "He That hath the key of David upon His shoulder." And you may take that door in two senses. The power of spreading the Gospel among the surrounding heathen, as S. Paul speaks: "A great door and effectual is opened to me." Or, it may be, that more blessed door, the entrance to be abundantly ministered into the Kingdom of Heaven. Either way, the reason that follows is one of those divine arguments so infinitely above the reasonings of man. "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; *for* thou hast little strength." What, impossible to be conquered, because we are weak? Even so: because that very weakness enlists omnipotence on our side. It was, no doubt, from reasoning after the manner of men, that our translators put in, contrary to the Greek, that word *a*. Not so the HOLY GHOST. It is something after the same

method of argument as that sublime passage of Tertullian: "The Son of God went about healing disease and infirmity: it is possible because it is unlikely; and died on the Cross for us: it is probable because it is incredible; and rose again the third day: it is certain because it is impossible." And take the opposite side of the picture, and see how the blessed Apostle of to-day speaks of that, with the bitterest irony he ever allows himself to use: "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: *and I would to* God *ye did reign*, that we also might reign with you."

"I have set before thee an open door." Now, my Sisters, if that may be said of any set of persons, it certainly may be so said of you. You know how many open doors have been set before us; you know too how hard men have tried to shut them; and you know, best of all, that we have little strength. Little strength in respect of numbers: were you half as many again it would not be more than sufficient to do properly the work you have in hand. And little strength individually; each of you feels that for herself better than any one else could tell her. Then the question is, whether the conclusion of the clause is true of

you also. "Thou hast little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My Name." That Name to which you are more especially bound: that dear Name which goes up from your mouths every morning as incense to be presented at the heavenly altar: that name on which we have even now been calling, which even now we have been praising. You do deny it, if, so dedicated to it, you act before others so as to bring dishonour on it: and that, not only in things absolutely wrong, but in those that, as S. Paul says, are not convenient: you do deny it if, whatever your hand finds to do, you do with less than all your might, giving a portion only of strength, and energy, and labour to Him who has a right to the whole of it. You do deny it, if by constantly and pertinaciously shirking (to use the common word) any duty, and so giving trouble to those above you, you so gain a place, an office, more to your own fancy. You do deny it, if you pick and choose between different duties, so that you throw all your power into the one you like, and slur over and perform in a slovenly way that which you do not like.

"I have set before thee an open door." That is, in the other sense, that gate which is of one solid pearl and which leads into the King's

City, that City whose light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; that gate through which nothing shall in any wise enter that defileth. Set before you indeed! And how, or by what way you enter in, so only you *do* enter in, that, GOD be praised, is in His Hands, not in yours. Only, as this day's Apostle says: "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there;" (and which of us can tell what glorious things will befall us in that Heavenly Jerusalem to which we are professing to go? but he continues:) "Save that the HOLY GHOST witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." So you may be almost certain that you will have trial, and temptation, and trouble enough before that open gate is reached at last. And then the thing is, that you for yourselves, and I for each of you, and for myself too, should be able to take on our own lips the glorious words which follow: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy."

It may be that one or more than one of you may so be called to die; GOD has taught you that you have no charmed lives. If so, such an one

is the happier. But anyhow, so far as I have the power, no one shall ever join us without being fully aware that no one can become a Sister without trial and distress enough: and that if it be not trouble from without, it will be temptation from within. And remember what we were saying last Sunday; that the only two Churches of the seven which have no kind of trial or temptation mentioned, are those to which it was said—to the one, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead;" to the other, "So then, because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth."

And before we go on, see how our Lord has gloriously made good His Title of the Faithful and the Amen, the True Witness. Two Churches only were free from blame; two Churches only have survived till now: Smyrna and Philadelphia. Smyrna, the less praised, though still not blamed, flourishes in a worldly point of view; and, therefore, it is less wonderful that many Christians should still survive there. But Philadelphia, though a poor little weak place, maintained its independence against the Turks, when the rest of Asia Minor was in their hands for eighty years: then made good terms for itself, and now is the most flourish-

ing Church of Asia. Must we not say that our dear LORD's promise has been dearly made good?

And next: "I have set before thee an open door." What opened it? The key of the House of David. Ah! how wonderfully the Prophets, and the Evangelists, and the Apostles agree in one! We first read of this where mention is made of Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, Hezekiah's faithful servant. Let him have been never so glorious an Old Testament Saint, (and a glorious Saint he must have been,) the noble sayings of Isaiah were seen even by the Jews not to have their final termination in him.

"And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah."

Now mark: "The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder." Look at that other passage in the same most marvellous of all Prophets: in the same Fifth Evangelist. "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder."

In both cases, why shoulder, and not shoulders? besides, who would speak of so carrying a key,

of so laying a government? Surely for this cause: That key which opens the Kingdom of Heaven, that government which is exalted above all powers, both in heaven and earth, is none else than the Cross. And how was that borne? Was it not on *the* shoulder? Could it have been carried otherwise? So see, my Sisters, your guide to victory in this world, if GOD so grant it, will be the opener for you of Paradise in the next. Ah me! Is not this another lesson how there is but one way, if for all true servants of the Cross-bearing King, so especially of those who more especially profess to take up His Cross? who wear it openly displayed on their breasts, who can scarcely enter a room in their own house without seeing it the one chief object, the one dearest pattern?

That is the key, and the only key, which unlocks this door: and a singular thing it is, how the old type has kept its place physically, when the metaphorical meaning has long been forgotten. Did you ever see an elaborate key of which the wards were not made crosswise? And notice this: on account of that especial promise to Eliakim, the Jews connected the idea of a key with that of the coming of the Messiah. Further, mediæval Saints tell us why it should have pleased our LORD to submit to

the necessity of bearing His Cross on one shoulder: namely, that is, that we, bearing it after Him, must bear whatever our especial Cross is, for ourselves. It is written, "It cost more to redeem their souls: so that he must let that alone for ever." In the same way, we all know how human sympathy cannot go beyond a certain point: how, dearly as we may love each other, sometimes in the hardest straits we are left to Him only Who has perfect fellowship with us. I shall never forget how it was once said to me, many, many years ago, by one whom I dearly loved, how, looking at our dear LORD only in His human character, there was the glorious completeness of His sympathy: that when our conscience tells us we are right, though we may thereby offend the dearest of earthly friends, we do but join ourselves (if you wish the literal Greek expression in the New Testament), *glue* ourselves to Him. I know it is a very simple, common-place remark, but it is just those things that so fix themselves in the heart.

Anyhow: this "little strength," and this "open door:" you have the one; GOD grant you may keep the other!

And now, &c.

SERMON VIII.*

FAINT, YET PURSUING.

"*Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*"—Rev. iii. 11.

It is impossible to approach Advent,—the first Advent we have thus spent together, the first Advent in which we have openly undertaken the especial service of God,—without thoughts which this verse seems exactly to express; the two clauses: one of which may well make us tremble, while the other is full of brightness and of hope. Just so I feel with respect to all of you; now more than at other times, because such a season cannot pass over you without doing you either great good or great harm. Each of you has besetting sins to overcome, against which, if she have not made considerable progress by Christmas, she will be much further off from the goal of her hopes, the crown of her struggles, a joyful recompense

* Preached on the last Sunday after Trinity, 1856.

from her LORD and her GOD. Each of you has some good resolution to cherish, which the coming season has the power of fostering and drawing out, as warm spring weather does the buds and flowers. And, if they are not so drawn out, they will be checked and nipped, if not utterly cut off, before we come to the glorious festival to which we are now beginning to look forward. Then with all these thoughts comes that also,—that if it be so, if any one of you, my dearest Sisters, go back instead of advancing, the fault, it is true, will also be yours, but neither, perhaps, may I be altogether guiltless. So that, on the whole, the approach of any season like Advent, and more especially its approach in a House like this, where we know who will ask the question, "What do ye more than others?" might well make us say, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

But then, on the other hand, if Advent calls us to look on to that fearful day in which the righteous scarcely shall be saved, then the last week of the Church's year invites us to look back. And when I see how GOD has hitherto led you all safely on, not indeed without many falls and weaknesses, but still *on*—how, having obtained help of GOD we all stand before Him this day—I can also say with S. Paul, "Being

confident that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of JESUS CHRIST." And I say to you, in looking back to the last year, and especially to that latter part of it, since we have been more closely knit together, since we have been fixed in this place, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy GOD led thee, and humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna"—(Ah, my dear Sisters, you know how often!) "that He might teach thee that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live."

Yes, you all come to this Advent in a far different way from that in which you have approached the Advents of past years. Never before had any of you the responsibility of so many Holy Communions, never before had you so much strength given you by the Body and Blood of Him That is all strength. Since last Advent, several of you have made your first Confessions, have passed through all the shame and misery of preparing for them, have known the blessedness and comfort of being able to forget the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before; have gone through fire and water, and have

been brought out into a wealthy place. And all of you have at least been more regular in Confession—all of you in the very nature of things more regular in prayer—all of you approach this holy season for the first time averring: "As for me and my house, I will serve the LORD." Dearest Sisters, knowing what you each of you know of yourselves, do not you think that I have some reason to be anxious for you all? Every reason indeed, were it not for one thing:—I know that He Whom you serve is able to keep that which you have committed unto Him against that day; and I know that the promise still holds good.

Now listen again to the first part of the text: "Behold I come quickly; hold fast that thou hast." Now, at first sight, this seems one of those disappointing verses, of which I have spoken to you before, where, after some great grace or blessing is pronounced, the duty or consequence of it is so much less—to say it with all reverence—so much poorer, than we might have expected. For example: "Take unto you the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to"—what? Having done all, to *stand;* and that is all. "Therefore, seeing that we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we"—

what? "We faint not." And now, again: "Behold, I come quickly"—and how might we have expected the verse to conclude? Would it not have been: "And we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Would it not have been: "Behold, I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus?" And yet you see how much less, how much tamer, the exhortation at first sight seems. "Hold fast that thou hast!" What! we might ask, is this all? looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; that appearing, the anticipation of which might enable us to do anything, to endure any labours, to despise any sufferings—is this all? Only to hold fast that we have? Only not to go backward? Yes; but this is not all the sense, as we shall see presently; yet still, in that sense, there is a great lesson for us. Not to go back in anything is to advance most surely. Never to permit ourselves to do less for God in any one way than we have ever done, necessitates us to take many and many a step onward; else we cannot hold our own. S. Paul says, They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But this much at least we may do, we may

resolve by the grace of the Holy Ghost never to do less than we have done at the best; and, notwithstanding falls and shortcomings, to resolve on keeping what we have gained, and to remember that most true proverb, "He that, in running, stumbles without falling takes a step quicker."

But after all, "Hold fast that thou hast," is best explained by the latter part of the verse, "That no man take thy crown." The crown then *is* yours already, only hold it fast. It may well be called "that thou hast," because nothing else is worth having at all. But the very expression, "hold it fast," shows what a struggle you must expect for it. Well then, this verse gives us the great comfort of the season of Advent. If it be a hard struggle, it cannot be a long one. Venerable Bede told us, at All Saints, "For the ineffable and unbounded goodness of God has provided this also, that the time for labour and for agony shall not be extended, not long, not enduring, but short, and, so to speak, momentary: that in this brief and little life should be the pain and the labour; that, in the life to come, which is eternal, should be the reward; that the labours should come quickly to an end; but that the reward of endurance should be without end; that after the darkness

of this world, they should behold the most beautiful light." And notice, that the same command is given to two of the seven Churches, and in both cases is joined to the same declaration. To Thyatira it is written, "That which ye have already, hold fast till I come." To Philadelphia, as we have heard, "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast." *Till I come.* I wish we had those words constantly in our hearts; a hard struggle to carry on, a hard race to run; but then it is only "Till I come." Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might—because the night is at hand when no man can work—because it is only "Till I come." There is but a short time to do deeds of love; there is but a short time to fight the good fight of faith; there is but a short time to exercise hope. "Behold, I come quickly" . . . "So much the more as ye see the day approaching." And now, my dearest Sisters, you must each for yourselves resolve to take some special task in hand this Advent, ay, and resolve further that Christmas shall not find it undone. You have yet time to make up your determination about this before the old year of the Church, whose sands are fast running out, shall have come to an end. For my part, as you all know, I am ready, as I am bound, to

help you to the uttermost of my power; but, after all, remember that it is very poor help that any earthly assistance can be. "It is not in me; GOD shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." "That no man take thy crown." S. Bernard says, "It is well said: *thy* crown. For to all that have contended here, although in different fights, to all that have run well here, although in different races, a special crown is appropriated; as the Martyrs shall wear a diadem of ruby, the Confessor of gold, so also for Chastity is there a crown of snow-white brilliancy."

And not so only: but as the cunning artificer decks the crown which he has in hand with many and various jewels, according to the riches and the pleasure of him for whom it is made, so each good work done by the elect in this world, forms as it were a separate gem in the diadem of their blessedness on high. Each, therefore, has his crown; as each has his own sorrows and trials in this valley of misery, so each has his own reward and coronation in the Kingdom of Glory: according to that saying, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." "Hold fast that thou hast" against Satan, against the world, against yourself. Against Satan, whom our King was slain that He might

conquer; against the world, which our Saviour was manifested that He might redeem; against yourselves, whose likeness the Infant of Bethlehem took on Himself, whose nature He assumed, to whom He left an example that we might follow His steps. He indeed held fast that He had. He laid His hand on this world to deliver it from the power of the enemy; and not even in death did He relax His grasp, till He had led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. He will hold us fast, never doubt it; if only we have grace and courage to cling to Him in spite of all hindrances, to go with Him in spite of all dangers, to abide with Him in spite of, and through, all temptations.

And now, &c.

SERMON IX.*

THE GLORY THAT SHALL BE REVEALED.

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, *and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works,* Lord God *Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O* Lord, *and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest. And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in Heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles."*—Rev. xv. 3-6.

We have come to the other extremity of the glorious Easter rainbow. The Feast of the Lord's Resurrection is over: the Octave, "Because I live, ye shall live also," takes its place. And so in the text we hear of those songs and of that music, of those victors, those happy palm-bearers, who are keeping the true Feast of Tabernacles: who with joy and gladness

* Preached on Low Sunday, 1863.

have been brought, and have entered into the King's Palace. And we hear too of the mighty tribulation through which they passed: how they got the victory over the fourfold enemy, over the Wild Beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. That Antichrist, who, conquered, the warfare of the Church will be accomplished, her iniquity pardoned: that image, no doubt some devilish caricature of the miracle of the Resurrection; and his mark and his name, the impressing of which, whatever it may be, will bring on the final persecution. It is worth while to notice how, from the very beginning, Satan has seemed to exult in imitating GOD'S miracles: as when Jannes and Jambres cast down their rods, and they were turned into serpents; or changed water into blood, or brought forth frogs on the land. So, as the greater number of holy writers piously believe, that deadly wound of the wild beast which was healed, will be a diabolical parody of the Resurrection. For it goes on directly, "All the world wondered after the wild beast;" as if that were the crowning, the stupendous miracle, which clinched his authority. And notice: as we are marked in our foreheads with the LORD'S sign, so will his unhappy servants be with the mark of the wild

beast; and as the promise to him that overcometh was the white stone and the new Name, the LORD's new and everlasting Name, written on it, so must the others have the wild beast's name: or (and time only will show what is the difference), the mark of his name. Owing to that unhappy division into chapters, you may never have noticed the antithesis in these, at the end of the thirteenth and at the beginning of the fourteenth: "And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

And yet once more. Notice how the acclamations on earth, "Who is like unto the Wild Beast? Who can make war with him?" find their counterpart in the triumphal hymn of Heaven, "Who shall not fear Thee, O LORD, and glorify Thy Name?"

It is not useless, my Sisters, to look on to that time of terrible tribulation, when the fountains of the great deep of temptation will be broken, and to the victors that even over that shall conquer; and then to look back to our own little trials, and consider how we, who

so often fail now, could hope to stand then? It is very probable, after all, that the famous number, six hundred and sixty-six, is only a type of concentrated and supernatural temptation; six being, as we have often seen, the number of temptation. Doubtless it may also have reference to some especial name; but that the other meaning was intended to be there also, I can hardly doubt. A fearful thought: these daily trials, these petty temptations, these fearful assaults of Satan are the same in kind, and only different in degree, with that final trial of which the terror is so great that, except those days were shortened, no flesh could be saved; that GOD has but to relax for one moment the chains which hold Satan, and he would fall on us, as he will fall on them. It is as with the inhabitants of a volcanic country; subject, every now and then, to slight shocks of earthquakes, foretelling that terrible eruption, which, though they little think it, is some day to overwhelm their country.

But now, "If ye then be risen with CHRIST, seek those things which are above." It is a marvellous thing, that, while they fully make good what S. Paul tells us, that it is impossible for one who had been admitted for awhile into heaven, to explain to earthly minds what he

had seen, yet that (if I may use the word without irreverence) those sketches of heavenly scenery should, while so mysterious, have such ravishing beauty. Here, for example, "The sea of glass mingled with fire;" there, in that description in Exodus, when the elders saw the GOD of Israel, "There was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of Heaven in his clearness:" or again, in Ezekiel: "The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness; and the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creatures was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above." Ah me! Sometimes, when I speak to you of that next world, and realize to myself that some of you (some, who have listened to me here, as you now), know what it is; have given in their account, perhaps are present here, adoring that Body of their LORD and ours, which now they can never again receive: I think with what a kind of tender pity they must hear what I say, they must enter into what we all feel. "*That* the happy world? These the good things prepared?" It must indeed, my Sisters, be *the* wonder:—"Oh how *could* we have imagined, in our wildest imagina-

tion, that only which is so utterly below the reality!"

And, about the sea of glass. Notice: there was but One, Who, in this world, walked even on the sea: His one follower, who so desired to walk,—we know how his attempt ended. But, put the whole mystery together—the boundlessness of the sea, the transparency of the glass, the brilliance of the fire. I remember once when, in one of the narrow sea-straits that divide the little islands of Denmark, I was voyaging this way and that way a whole summer day, with nothing to do, but to lean over the boat-side, and to watch how the glorious rays of the sun shot in through the pure green sea, working out those ripples of gold and emerald which no earthly words can describe: how the sight brought to my mind that true sea; that sea, glorious in its boundlessness, and in its depth, but which yet has the element of fire added to it, and perhaps some little thing more of that Future Kingdom was then made known to me.

Then, they shall not pass over it; then they shall not say, "LORD, *if* it be Thou, bid me that I come unto Thee upon the water." No: then they shall stand on the infinite abysses of GOD'S judgments: shall see how all things

have worked together for good to them that love GOD; shall perceive how all the waves of this troublesome world were bearing them onwards to the calm of the Everlasting Port; and that, with the clearness of the glass; that, with the love of the fire. They *stand* on the sea of glass.

And they sing—what song? The song of Moses; and not only that, but of Moses the servant of GOD, and of the Lamb. Yes! it is a wonderful testimony to the oneness of the two worlds. That we are one, we and they, in some sort, we know: as a holy man of old says, "So far as I can judge, they who, by the infinite mercy of GOD, enter into that Kingdom, will be astonished at this above all things, how things earthly are but the types of things heavenly. But," he continues, (for he was speaking to a Religious House) "whether that or not, what matters? If only we attain it, whether in the transfiguration of our old way of seeking Him, or in a new life in, and to Him, why should we care?"

But, a little more yet. The song of Moses: Of Moses: with what title? The servant of GOD. As if we were thereby taught that all these hymns, all this ritual, is not of earth, earthly, only: GOD forbid!

More or less:

> "The Church on earth, with answering love
> Echoes her mother's joys above."

[The train of thought thus abruptly broken off, is thus carried on in another unpublished Sermon:]

Can we doubt then that there is a marvellous analogy between the service of the two? especially when we know that even now they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. One then of our Canticles they do employ: why not more? Music we know they have; the temple music was from the pattern of that, as ours from the temple; and surely, if it were only for the remotest possibility that our tones are some faint shadowings out of the celestial harmonies, and that when we come to the other side, we shall but find their transfiguration, is not that a reason for clinging to them with all our strength?

SERMON X.*

THE HEAVENLY JOY OF HEAVENLY SERVICE.

"*His servants shall serve Him.*"—Rev. xxii. 3.

They tell a story that once, in a certain monastery, the Theologian, as he was called, that is, the brother whose office it was to give instruction in theology, was catechising the younger monks on the Book of Revelation. Among the other questions, he asked of each one present what promise or saying in the Apocalypse seemed to him the most full of comfort? One would have it,—"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes:" another, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain:" another, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with Me in My Throne." He praised them

* Preached on Tuesday in the Eleventh week after Trinity, August 25, 1857.

according to their deserts: and then, turning to the youngest, who had not yet spoken, "Now, Thomas," he said, "let us hear what you think." The answer was, "His servants shall serve Him:" and that young monk, Thomas Hammark, is now known all through the Church as Thomas à Kempis.

Yes: and I think that it was an answer not unworthy of him who was afterwards to write the work, which, of all uninspired books, was to be the greatest comfort to GOD's servants in this world. Not only because it showed deeper love: but because it also exhibited more self-knowledge. It was not that he should rest from sorrow, or from watchfulness, or have no more occasion to fear, as the others had said: but that he should serve, in reality, above, Him Whom he had only tried to serve below. He was thinking of his LORD, not of himself: he was eager rather to accomplish His Will, than to receive His happiness.

Now, dear Sisters, there is a wonderful lesson, and a very comforting lesson for us, too, in that text. Surely, if ever any Saint of GOD, still in the flesh, were ever raised above the flesh, were in a state of ecstacy nearest approaching the Beatific Vision, it must have been John, on the evening of that Easter Day, when his vision

was coming to an end. What Saint ever so likely as he, then, to take the highest possible view of a Christian's daily life and walk on earth? to find all things practicable? to look for deeds of grace and faith in every one, that none but the most favoured of GOD'S servants have attained to? And yet, if one of his brightest and happiest promises is this, "His servants shall serve Him," it implies that even then he realized how little they could serve Him on earth; how often they were sore let and hindered in running the race which was set before them; how they were set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of their nature they could not always stand upright. Our loving LORD and Master caused this verse to be written for our especial comfort.

Dearest Sisters, you would serve Him,—is it not so?—with every power of your soul and body. How many hindrances, vexatious temptations, drawbacks of every sort come in between your reasonable service and yourselves, you all too well know. It is very sad: but you are not to think it strange; it is very sad: but you are to take courage; it is very sad, but it will not always be so. You are not to think it strange, when every one of the Saints in their

generation has so bitterly complained that he could not do the things that he would; that he was carnal, sold under sin; has been ready to cry out over and over again, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust;" has thousands of times had need of that earnest ejaculation, "LORD, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief." You are to take courage, knowing that we are not better—as Elijah said—than our forefathers. It is S. Peter's great argument to resist discouragement. "Whom resist," says he, "stedfast in the faith:" and why? "Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren which are in the world." And it will not always be so. O happiness indeed of that blessed place, where, what we seek to do now, we shall be able to do for ever: where we shall want no rest in GOD'S service: where we shall not undo with one hand what we do with the other: where we can never flag, but whatever we take in hand will indeed be done with all our might!

I had not intended, dearest Sisters, to have spoken to you on this morning, fearing lest I should weary you by talking to you so many times, as it has happened from the concurrence of the Sunday and Festival. Bear with me, however, if it should be so. I can have no

dearer wish than that of each of you, even in this world, the text should become more and more true; and of that of which one most thinks, and for which one most prays, one cannot well help speaking.

"His servants shall serve Him." And this is the school where you are to learn that service which will then be made perfect. Many and many a lesson it will cost you—some painful, some pleasant: but whether painful or pleasant matters not, so they be real lessons, and so they be well learnt. Sometimes our dear LORD takes you in hand Himself, opens your hearts Himself to understand, communes with you as once with His disciples going to Emmaus. When you kneel in silence in this Oratory,—when you kneel in solitude before the Blessed Sacrament—(and yet what do I say? how *can* you be alone, when He is with you?) I hope that He often and often speaks to you, puts earnest desires of His service into your minds,—soothes away fears,—removes difficulties,—calls you in such sort that you cannot but say, "LORD, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Then again, another of your great lessons is the recitation of those Psalms which are indeed, in a lower sense, our daily bread. How wonderfully they teach us, in what-

ever frame of mind we are, whatever we want to know! Like the Jewish tradition about the manna, they have that taste for us which at the time we most desire. To each of you the same Psalm at the same time may be speaking with a different voice: saying to each of you the exact thing which she most needed, and which would help her most. Further, another of your chief lessons is in your self-examinations, and when you sum them together in your Confessions. Then God teaches you of your dangers, that you may have the better knowledge of the only way of safety: then He brings to remembrance your falls, that the weight may be more resolutely laid aside, the sin which doth most easily beset you wrenched from you, and the race set before you run with the eye and heart more entirely fixed on JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

"His servants shall serve Him." And if I had to sum up the three greatest and most necessary rules for this your education in His service, they would not be far to seek. The first would be, to think nothing little in it. The second, to strive against all discouragement as the most dangerous of temptations. The third, never to be weary of beginning over again. Of

every thing that comes before you in the day you may most truly say, This is a great work, for it is done for GOD. Oh, how it would hallow and transfigure everything you do,—oh, what a little heaven it would make this place, if you could but bear that constantly in mind! When one of you, the other day, left off her work for a moment, and knelt by her scouring-pail for her Priest's blessing, it seemed to make me realize the Apostle's command, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of GOD." Yes:—I know how true this ought to be everywhere: I long that it were ten thousand times more true of myself: but in a religious community surely it must apply with an emphasis that it cannot elsewhere attain.

That is the first and most necessary thing of all:—but the second scarcely less so: Never to be discouraged. The misery of allowing ourselves to be disheartened, we all know: but we scarcely think enough about its sin. Dearest Sisters, we have not time to be discouraged. Satan will not cease his attacks, while we are mourning over a fall. GOD'S work will not stand still for our leisure, while we are trying to animate ourselves to undertake it. This is one of the many blessings of that blessed Sacrament of Penitence, that it enables

us so much more quickly to rise from a fall. We yield to temptation: we know it: we grieve for it: we go through the sad details of our fall in that night's self-examination,—and what then? Are we always to be going over the same ground again and again?—always harping on the same circumstances? Surely not: lay them by till your next Confession, and do not let them hinder you or distress you in the meanwhile. We, dearest Sisters, who know that we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we speak of this ministry of reconciliation, we, who know in Whose word we have believed when we kneel at that tribunal where we are ourselves the accusers and ourselves the criminals,—we can do this. We lay our burden aside for a while,—not that we would forget it,—not that we think lightly of it,—but that we may the more effectually carry it to the foot of the Cross, and lay it in the LORD'S Tomb. Oh, dear Sisters, believe me that there is nothing which from the very beginning of a Sister's life you have need to cultivate more than that most blessed grace of hope! Some of you may be tired of hearing this so often: but I say only to you what I say to myself. If at the beginning of my life as a Priest I had only had some one to insist on this truth as I

now insist on it to you, oh, how many mistakes and how much misery I should have been spared! how often I should have found out that what I took for repentance was in real truth only a kind of despondency! The more dearly I love you all,—the more earnestly I long for your advance in the Christian Life,—the more I see how GOD'S first message in the most glorious series of prophecies that ever were spoken, is His first message now, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people." That was the first text on which I ever preached, and I pray GOD that it may be the chief thing, and, if it be His will, the last, which I ever do as a Priest!

And the third thing I mentioned springs directly from that: the constantly beginning over again, as if we had never done anything before. Doing each recurring duty, as if we had never hitherto attempted it at all. Each time you come into this Oratory, for instance, forget past times with all their wandering thoughts, all their coldness and deadness, and begin afresh. Each time you receive the LORD'S Body and Blood, forget all past want of love and hope and faith, and begin all over again. But above all, each new day, commence it as if it were a new life. This is one of the chief

rules that all the masters of spiritual life have given us: and depend upon it, none *can* be more helpful. Try it, and you will say, like the Samaritans of old, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying."

"His servants shall serve Him." In this way, while yet in the school of this world: but how in the Home of their Country? Ah! that, as yet, must be all guess-work and fancy! But so it be GOD'S work, that is enough for us: happy work it must be in its very nature: perfect work it must be in those who are no longer imperfect. They rest not day nor night. Now then, as far as may be, let us try to follow that example. So much to be done, and so little time to do it in: so much work needed in ourselves, so much for others, and the night so rapidly coming, when no man can work. You, of all, ought to be most careful in having your work always, so to speak, made up;—your service always in hand. For you know that the life you have chosen involves not only more labour, but more risk than others. We know that any of you may at any one moment be called to labour in imminent peril: and that it is more than probable that some one of us now here before GOD will some day be, by that means, taken home to Him. I know that none

of these things move you:—I believe that you would not, like S. Paul, count your lives dear to yourself so you might finish your course with joy. Only remember that your lamps must always be burning,—your oil always ready,—it will not do for any of you, no, not for one moment, to slumber or sleep.

"His servants shall serve Him." Will you try now, more than before, that of this House the words may be true? that you will more earnestly use the help you have,—more resolutely set a watch over all your ways,—more carefully improve every means of grace? Dear Sisters, I wish I could do more for you. I wish, so far as I may do so in accordance with God's will, that I had greater power of helping you: but I absolutely wish—because it *is* in accordance with His will—that what powers I have were used better. Standing in the relation we do to each other, oh how much you fail in your duty to yourselves as well as to me, if you do not constantly and earnestly pray for me! How can you expect that God will enable me to help you, unless, to the very utmost of your ability, you help me? Never a fitter time to ask that, or any thing else, than when you kneel in the presence of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world! Oh that now, as

one after another you enter into this His then most sacred Palace, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, may teach you how to pray, and give you earnestness in prayer! may suggest the petition, and return the answer! may show you the need, and supply the remedy! These mornings, so spent, are indeed much to be remembered. They bring a great opportunity; they incur a most heavy responsibility. Often and often my thoughts turn here, as those hours pass by; often and often my prayers go up that whoever at that moment is kneeling before her Lord and her God may so kneel as becomes one dedicated to Him, as becomes one who is close to Him, close to the Flesh which He took in the Womb of Mary, close to the Blood which He poured forth on the Hill of Calvary; often and often I use that Psalm, "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble: the Name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary: and strengthen thee out of Sion; remember all thy offerings: and accept thy burnt sacrifice; grant thee thy heart's desire: and fulfil all thy mind."

Oh, truly happy Sister, who after thus having in her earthly life poured forth her soul to Him in His Sacramental Presence, advancing all the

while from strength to strength, growing all the while in His grace and knowledge, shall finally be taken home to the perfect blessedness and perfect holiness of seeing Him as He is!

And now, &c.

SERMON XI.*

ALPHA AND OMEGA.

"*I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.*"—REV. xxii. 13.

I NEED not tell you, my Sisters, how next, in the first place, to your own personal holiness, and in the second, to your work for CHRIST in His poor, this is my third desire for you, that you should see HIM everywhere, at all times, by all means, in Holy Scripture. Therefore it is that we have had our—to me at least—happy classes for so many years; therefore it is that now, lately, I have tried to make you do for yourselves, in our Antiphons and Psalms, what all along I have been endeavouring to do for you.

But, while we take separate passages, individual psalms, isolated paragraphs, in their Evangelical sense, this above all things we have occasion to learn, that it is not in this nor in that little bit—it is not in this lesson, and in

* Probably preached in 1862.

that gospel, and in the other prophecy, but everywhere, first, last, and middle, that our dear LORD is the whole aim of the Bible. What I want to impress on you more and more deeply, is this: that just as there is no parable in the gospel which may not have been also a literal fact, so, in the Old Testament, there is no fact which may not be a parable.

We know how sadly, sadly this has been forgotten by the later Church. Some few types we seize on, and all the rest we lose. And those few that we do take, we are apt to apply them only in the second and higher sense, forgetting their literal meaning. I think, dear Sisters, that very probably some of you, when rejoicing in that most glorious prophecy, "Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel, GOD with us," have not remembered that in the low, temporal, passing sense, the words simply meant, that a Jewish maiden, then a virgin, should, by her marriage with Isaiah, conceive, and bear a son; which son, as the prophecy goes on, should not have come to a knowledge of his right hand and his left, before the fearful confederacy of Syria and Israel, then formed against Judah, should be utterly overthrown, and have come to nought. I think it very possible that in those dear words,

"They pierced my hands and my feet; I may tell all my bones; they stand staring and looking upon me;" you have seen the Son of David alone, and not remembered that in some of his sufferings they must have been also applicable to the earthly David. Or again, that "They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture," refer to the irruption into the palace by the rebels under Absalom, firstly; and then, secondly—but oh, how much more gloriously!—to the day of Calvary. Nay; if this now strikes any one for the first time, I should not wonder if you thought me to be debasing these prophecies, by allowing that there is a first meaning at all. Not so. It is because in every history I want to see a prophecy; therefore, in every prophecy, I am willing to see a history. There is a grain of truth in all heresy. There is a grain of truth in that book, whose writers may GOD in His infinite mercy bring to repentance, Essays and Reviews. And this is it: Those prophecies which we take of our LORD were prophecies of others. They were; of others also, and in the loveliest sense; of Him in the deepest, dearest, loveliest, most glorious, most celestial meaning.

We scarcely, I think, remember how much that one expression would teach us; where it is

said of our LORD, that He, going with His disciples to Emmaus, beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

And, no doubt, could you read the Old Testament as they read it, new meanings, new symbolism, would open out on every side. Suppose, for example, that all through the Book of Joshua, wherever his name is read, it were written, as it is in the Greek, Jesus, would that show you no closer analogy between the two? So of Judas and Judah; so of Simon and Simeon; so of many others.

Now let us take an example of what I mean. One who is never mentioned in the Gospels; one to whom allusion, as foreshadowing CHRIST, is never made. I mean Joseph. We never can be content with the loose bundle of figurative events, which we are accustomed to discover in his life, without seeking for some closer string to bind them together. But now, will you attend while I pass shortly before you what we may gain from his whole story. I will speak deliberately; follow me with your best memory.

Hundreds of times, I have no doubt, we have all read the part borne by Simeon and Judah in saving Joseph, and seen no great type of Gospel history therein. Listen now. When

we come to read how it was *Judas* (according to the old version), who proposed to betray the righteous man for twenty pieces of silver, because there would be no profit in his blood when he went down into the pit; when we find another of the twelve, Simeon (the same as Simon—think of Simon of Cyrene) visited with exemplary punishment, ("he took Simeon and bound him before their eyes") as though guilty of a special denial of the Just. When lastly we see Reuben, the unstable man of power, seeking, like Pilate, to deliver the captive from his brethren: proposing, like Pilate, to *punish* the innocent, and to release him: What then?

Why then; we see that the great Passion of future ages is already being acted: we see that an unconscious, fearful rehearsal was taking place among the twelve sons of Israel. Then all the parts of the tale fall into their place. Attend, my Sisters: I will speak slowly that you may follow. We see in Joseph the beloved of his father, yet the rejected of his brethren; observed in every saying by his earthly parent, inheriting the birthright, yet born late in time. We see him falsely accused (to Potiphar), by slanderous influence condemned, delivered up to the Gentiles (the Egyptian judges), brought before a heathen

ruler; promising life to one of the two malefactors condemned with him, leaving the other to his fate; giving life to that first, through some mysterious connection with the squeezing the grapes, (the new wine in the glorious kingdom,) into the king's chalice; ministering to the spirits in prison—raised from that prison to proclaim God's will in a far country, and at once raised to the highest offices of that country, every knee bowing before him, every tongue saluting him as Zaphnath-paaneah, the Saviour of the world.

Once more, we see him departing into the far-off land, even Goshen; to prepare a place for those that were aforetime his enemies: sustaining the life of all nations by miraculous supplies of bread: receiving honour from Gentiles and from Jews: raising up his brethren, as he himself had been raised on the third prophetic day (you remember that it was *after* two *full* years that Pharaoh dreamed that dream which was the origin of Joseph's deliverance); lastly, his body preserved from corruption, and actually accompanying the chosen people in their entrance into the Promised Land.

Then at last we see that the fascination of the story does not chiefly depend on its in-

trinsic beauty; that the shadow of the Cross, and the glory of the Crown, rest on it, and give it that mysterious interest which a child can feel, but which a S. Thomas cannot wholly fathom

See again. The only story of our LORD'S childhood, the three days' search, is paralleled by the three days' search for Elijah, when he, too, was gone to his Father's house. His first miracle corresponds with the first of that glorious series by which Israel was set free. The same element of water changed, in one case, into blood for the destruction, in the other into wine for the support, of life. The last two, also, of Moses' miracles remain as signs to us Christians. Before our dear LORD'S ministry was completed, GOD'S people had already changed places with His enemies; and the plagues are now no longer fulfilled by contrast, but literally. He sends a thick darkness over all the land; in the one case, of three hours: in the other, of three days. It is a heathen now (mark, my Sisters, the remarkable apposition of ideas) it is a heathen now who entreats the Jewish people to spare the true Israel's life, beseeching the persecutors (only more hopelessly than Moses ever besought Pharaoh) to let Him go. A few years, and the plague of the first-

born has its terrible octave in the destruction of Jerusalem; the abomination of desolation gives the warning of the destroying angel; the true Jacob, forewarned, escapes; the rest perish.

Again: see how our dear LORD's miracles had almost all been foreshown. Once more follow me in your thoughts, as I slowly point them out.

In the preservation of Moses from the slaughter of the innocents;

In the healing Jeroboam's withered hand;

In the forty days' fasts of Moses and Elijah;

In the raising the poor widow's son at Zarephath (think of Nain);

The noble person's child at Shunem (think of Jairus);

"The iron did swim;" and the LORD walked on the water.

Jonah, at his own desire, exposed to the sea and sinking, is brought up from destruction. Peter, at his own desire walking on the water, beginning to sink, is saved.

In the rebuking of the Red Sea by Moses:

In the blasting of the fig-trees by his power (he smote their vines also, and *fig-trees*):

In the glorification of his countenance by a divine light;

In the cure of Naaman in Jordan, and of him that was washed in Siloam;

In the resurrection from the dead when a troop was nigh: (and then think of the keepers at the sepulchre;)

In the Ascension to Heaven of Elijah. Are not these marvellous likenesses? marvellous proofs of the One SPIRIT?

Sometimes the hint has to be thought out. Take an example. You have all of you read that dark saying, "As the shepherd delivers from destruction two legs, or the piece of an ear." Did you ever connect it with the way in which of the Good Shepherd it is written, "They brake not His legs;" and again how "He touched his ear, and healed him?"

Some day next week, if it please GOD, we will see how in His words as well as in His deeds, that same LORD is beginning, middle, and end; the Alpha of the Old Testament, the Omega of the New.

Meanwhile here we will rest: only let me ask you, my Sisters, now that we are drawing so very near to that most Holy Week, more than ever to lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset you, and to run with patience the race that is set before you.

Finish this week, and we look away from

ourselves and our sins to Him Who for us was made sin, that we might be made—as He grant that you, above others, may in the Eternal Easter be made—the righteousness of God in Him.

And now, &c.

SERMON XII.*

DEUS MEUS ET OMNIA.

"*I saw no Temple therein.*"—Rev. xxi. 22.

Let us confess, my Sisters, that if we now for the first time heard these words—heard them, too, after the ravishing description of our True Home which precedes them, they would fall rather blank on the ear. What! we, whose highest and best times have been in the Temple of God on earth, we, who believe that the most glorious services below are but the poorest shadows, the most wretched photographic negatives of the perpetual Liturgy there: to be told at last, "I saw no Temple therein!" What is the use of all the art, all the skill, all the labour, all the cost, to make our Churches less unworthy of the indwelling of Him whom Heaven and the Heaven of heavens cannot contain? What is the use of those great speeches which

* Preached at S. Margaret's, on the Tenth Sunday after Trinity, August 20th, 1864.

glow like a warm coal at one's very heart. "The house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great:" and that resolution of the Spanish Chapter, "Let us build such a cathedral, that they who come after us may take us to have been mad when we imagined it;" if, after all, when these things are passed away, "I saw no Temple therein." Again, what should we say of that city in a Christian land, of which a traveller, bringing home the description, should, as one of its most noteworthy peculiarities, write those words? Three of you, my Sisters, have not so long since stood with me before that wonderful picture of the Adoration of the Immaculate Lamb in the Cathedral of Ghent. There you remember what the vision of the great artist concerning New Jerusalem was:—how, far in the background, far beyond the lovely groups of Martyrs, and Virgins, and Confessors, and righteous judges, and righteous warriors, and the LAMB in the midst, on the Altar, as it had been slain, *he* saw not one Temple only, but many Temples: You remember how behind the everlasting foliage of the Garden of Paradise, there cluster, in all imaginable beauty, towers, and spires, and lanterns, with peeps of the utmost bound of everlasting hills between them. That was the dream of the great Christian

painter of all ages. What was the real vision of the Apostle? "I saw no temple therein." Yes: let us confess that at first hearing, the words do sound rather blank.

But then: O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! This is not the only instance in which, as regards that our future home, what might in one point of view be taken so differently, is, if looked at aright, so glorious.

"They rest not day nor night." That we know is said of the glorious City; said of it too, as concerning one of its chief glories and blessings. But is it not also true of the city of misery? They rest not day nor night. So, over and over again, we find that the "very excellent things" spoken, or to be spoken, of the City of God, are things which, except for the perfect happiness of that place, might be anything but blessings: they might be curses. "The gates of it shall not be shut at all." Would that be any happiness, here on earth, to us in our warfare? "For there shall be no night there." Would *that* be any blessing to us, here on earth, wearied as we often are: as our dear Lord, according to His Manhood, was before us? But the most remarkable lesson we have is in that most glorious self-contradiction, to say it with all reverence,

in Isaiah, when that fifth Evangelist, setting forth to us those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, says: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy GOD thy glory." And then: "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

So we come back to that: "I saw no Temple therein." And, lest any man should say, "This is a hard saying: who can bear it?" S. John gives us the reason: "For the LORD GOD Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it." That is, the One Temple, and the All Temple, that which cannot be seen, even then, with the bodies of our Resurrection, is this, and this only, The Beatific Vision.

There is something wonderfully solemn, as well as wonderfully comforting, in the way in which the early and mediæval Saints speak of that. How the whole heavenliness of Heaven is summed up in that, and well nigh in that alone. I know nothing that so shows the declension of the last three or four centuries, as

the little prominence (comparatively speaking) that, in every part of the Church, the holiest writers give to that. No one would say that either primitive or mediæval doctors failed in reverence to, in longing to be near, in realizing their communion with, the Saints. But find them preaching or writing of heaven, and the one great thought swallows up all the rest. Infinitely beyond, infinitely above all things, it is that Beatific Vision to which they point. Saint after Saint, page after page, I might quote; all to the same effect. Hear no giant of the Church, but an earnest, simple Abbot in the eleventh century; how he writes:

"And you ask what is this Vision concerning which I have related to you such wonders? Would to God, my brethren, I knew it for myself! but if I knew it, yet none the more should I be able to set it forth to you. If a Seraph, that is perfect in love, came among us, in his love desirous to tell us of it, he would but waste that love and that labour. If one of the Cherubim, that are complete in knowledge, spake to us of it, his wisdom would to us be foolishness. Moses besought that he might see the glory of God; and, say the Jews, it pleased God that one spark of that glory should fall on one of the mountains that stood round about Sinai;

and the mountain fell, the selfsame moment, to dust. And yet, my brethren, it is—not one spark—not the half-revealed, half-concealed Majesty of the Ever-Blessed TRINITY—but Its fullest manifestation, that is to be our eternal happiness. And oh, what change, what most miraculous change, must that great Sacrament of Death have wrought on us, that the very glory which we could not, in its slightest manifestation, behold and live, we shall then only live, only truly live, because we do behold! Consider what holy Job saith. 'Though after my skin worms destroy this body:' there you have the infinite humiliation of these bodies of ours; 'yet in my flesh shall I see GOD;' there you have their infinite strength."

So he writes; and, in very truth, that next world is a subject which we do not try to realize enough; to consider, not only, as one of our later divines so well said, how much we must be changed: how much holiness, how much purity, how much love, that waiting time in Paradise must give our souls: but also how much strength that waiting time in the earth must give our bodies. I was reading a story the other day which may well come in here. It was in the narrative of a traveller who wished to reach the North Pole. In some very

high latitude, where, as you know, the Northern Lights are magnificently brilliant, one night he was called from his berth by the captain of the ship: "Come on deck at once: the world is on fire!" They stood gazing at the sight for hours: and the description which that traveller has left us, only shows that he, too, had seen unspeakable things, which it is not possible for a man to utter. But when the glory was dying away, he said to the captain, "This has been *terribly* beautiful." "So terribly beautiful," replied the captain, an earnest Christian man; "*so* terribly beautiful, that I pray and beseech God I may never see the like again."

And once more: *Lift up your hearts.* If that can be said of a drop in the ocean, what of the ocean itself? What the Beatific Vision is, we can only fancy by knowing what it is not. And keeping all this in view, small regret shall we have in "I saw no temple therein," when that Beatific Vision itself will be our Temple. It is that God Who is Love, filling His happy servants with the outpouring of that love: it is the God Who is Light, satisfying them with the perfect brilliancy of that Light. And always remember, that into that height of glory our Human Nature has entered: that there, in

its fullest blaze, a Man is seated at the Right Hand of the FATHER: that eyes, in every point fashioned as our eyes, behold Him there, Whose Face, however afar off, we could not see and live.

But this absence of a Temple must remind us also of the absence of other things dear to us here as our very lives. As we know, there can be no Sacraments there. "What a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" And who shall tell how the blessed ones hereafter will look back on their Sacraments here, especially on the Chief and Crown of all Sacraments. Regret there can be none in that world; and the loving remembrance of what will then be passed for ever, who can interpret for them? By way of type and shadow: when, in GOD'S good time, we have our own chapel as worthy of GOD'S service as we can make it, we shall still lovingly remember this:—when we have our own quadrangle, we shall hold in dear remembrance this house, however inferior to that. "Forgetting the things that are behind, let us press forward to those that are before." And it ought only to open our eyes a little more to see how the glory of the Latter House shall be greater than of the former, when we learn that the things which had been most precious

and blessed to us here, are precisely the things that, to be without, will show our infinite nearness to our Lord there. Who would desire a Temple, who will worship in the Beatific Vision? Who would desire to see the Lord of Lords under the form of Bread and Wine, when, eye to eye, face to face, they shall behold Him: when from those lips they shall hear, (if they have first heard those most blessed words of welcome, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant,") shall hear anew, as the Apostles of old time, the "Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

And one thing more. "I saw no temple therein." That is the highest, truest glimpse we can get of New Jerusalem. Then, my Sisters, if that be so, does it not elevate, ennoble, transfigure, that part of the lives of any one of you which is spent away from any especial means of grace, of regular times of prayer, of the Sacraments?

Might it not thus also be most truly said, of hours either away from here, or, as I was saying this morning, in what the world would call drudgery, here: "I saw no temple therein." Be it so: be it so a thousand times over, if

only you can take the end of the same verse on your lips: "For the LORD GOD Almighty and the LAMB are the Temple of it." That which is almost the finishing stroke put by the Apostle of Love to his description of Heaven, cannot be an unblessed estate on earth. See how GOD sets the stamp of that True Home, not only on sufferings, but on deprivations borne for Him.

"I saw no Temple therein." GOD grant, my Sisters, that every time we worship Him in any of His dear temples, we may be made more and more meet for that yet more blessed *Templessness* above: that every time we draw near to any of the Sacraments in this world, we may be preparing ourselves for that Country where Sacraments are at an end: that City of which it is written, by one who had beheld it: "Now we see though a glass, darkly, but then face to face: now we know in part, but then shall we know, even as also we are known."

And now, &c.

SERMONS

ON

THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

SERMON I.*

THE NAME OF STRENGTH.

"Thou, O LORD, *art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy Name; leave us not."*—JER. xiv. 9.

You are expecting that I should speak to you of that Name which is exalted above every Name: that Blessed Name which is as ointment poured forth: that dear Name which, as I hope, is dearer to each of you than any other thing: that holy Name which whosoever names, must depart from iniquity: that happy Name which they who bear in their hearts *here*, shall bear in their foreheads *there:* as it is written: "And they shall see His Face, and His Name shall be in their foreheads." But, my dear Sisters, what am I that I should speak of that Name of which so many Saints when preaching have said both to themselves and others: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground?" You heard last night† what S. Bernard said in his own

* Preached August 7th, 1856.

† The reference is to the lessons from a Sermon of S. Bernard

religious house, then in the first fervour of its devotion. And I thought, as we were then

in the second nocturn of the Office of the Holy Name. The passage, as given by Dr. Neale, may be acceptable to the reader.

Thy Name is as ointment poured forth.

There is no doubt a similitude between oil and the Name of JESUS, the Bridegroom of our souls: nor does the HOLY GHOST, without a purpose, compare the one to the other. Oil shines, oil feeds, oil anoints. It cherishes fire; it nourishes flesh; it diminishes pain. Oil, then, is light, food, and medicine. Thus, too, the Name of the Bridegroom: it shines when preached: it feeds when meditated: it soothes when invoked. Whence, think you, so great and so sudden a light of faith in the whole world, unless by the Name of JESUS preached? In the light of this Name, GOD hath called us to His wonderful light. Whence it is written, "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the LORD." Art not thou strengthened as often as thou rememberest It? What is there which so restores the darkened senses, so increases virtues, so strengthens goodness, so cherishes love? All meat is dry, if it be not sprinkled with this oil: insipid, if it be not savoured with this salt. JESUS is honey in the mouth, jubilation in the heart. We said that the Name of JESUS was medicine. Is any one among you sorrowful? Let the Name of JESUS come into his heart, and thence leap into his mouth: and behold, as the light of that Name arises, every cloud is scattered and fair weather returns. Does any one fall into sin, and run, in despair, on the highway of death? If he invokes the Name of Life, shall he not forthwith be restored to life? If the fountain of tears be exhausted in any, let the Name of JESUS be invoked, and it will flow forth more abundantly, and more sweetly. Is any one hesitating, and trembling in danger? This Name of virtue being invoked, at once gives courage and repels fear. It is written, "Call upon Me in the time of trouble, so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise Me." Nothing so restrains the impetuosity of anger, so brings down the swelling of pride, so heals the wound of envy, so extinguishes the flame

hearing those words of his, on fire as they are with love, how true it is that JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. We, at all events, seek to know no other Name than those Saints knew: on it we hang all our hopes as they did: in it we desire to find all our comfort as they did: to its honour we pray that we may live as they did: in its cause, if GOD so willed, we should ask Him to give us grace to die as they did. And see now for a moment what this most dear and blessed Name has been, from the time that it was first heard till now. Think first of those early Saints

of luxury, so tempers the thirst of avarice. When I name JESUS, I think of a Man meek and gentle, sober, chaste, and merciful, and resplendent with all beauty and glory, and that same Man, Almighty GOD: may He heal me by His example, and lead me by His assistance. Thou hast an universal medicine, O my soul, laid up in the shrine of this Name, the healthful Name of JESUS: there is not one disease in which it is inefficacious. Ever be it in your breast, ever in your hand: let all your senses and acts be directed to JESUS. He invites thee to this, when He says, Set Me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm. O how fair art Thou to Thine Angels, O LORD JESUS in the form of GOD, in the day of Thine Eternity, among the splendours of the Saints: Splendour and Figure of the Substance of the FATHER, and brightness of everlasting life! How beautiful art Thou to me, O my LORD, in the laying aside of this Thy Glory, when Thou didst empty Thyself, and didst put off Thine imperishable light! Then love chiefly was shown, then mercy principally was manifested, then grace was more plainly displayed.

that, in the amphitheatre, were called to glorify God by giving their bodies to the wild beasts: how, while eighty thousand pitiless eyes were eagerly expecting their last agony, while the hinges of the dens were opening, and the lion preparing for his fatal spring, this Name was, in many and many an instance, the Martyr's last word, so that "Jesus, be Thou my Jesus," is recorded to have been thus said again and again. Think again of those whom you would more especially desire to resemble in their holiness, in their purity, in their love to the Heavenly Bridegroom, how it is recorded of them, that by the virtue of this Blessed Name they were preserved unpolluted in dens of infamy, were guarded safely from sacrilegious hands. Think of those who died for the sake, absolutely and expressly for the sake, of this Name; the countless Martyrs made by those who denied our Lord to be God of God, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father. Think again how many Christian souls have departed out of this world with that very Litany on their lips which we say every morning: dying *in* it, so that the old question might again be debated with respect to them, whether their last supplication or their soul were first before the Throne of God. It is

recorded of one of the Martyrs of the fierce persecution that raged in Cochin China some two hundred years ago, that kneeling down (as the custom was) before the elephant that was to destroy her, she said this same Litany, and when she came to the suffrage, "Jesu, Bridegroom of the Virgins," the beast struck her through with his tusks, and so she entered into glory. A hundred years before that, there is the account of a Portuguese ship which foundered in the Atlantic, and the few survivors reported that in the moment of its going down, the sailors were uniting in the Litany of the Name of JESUS. So, in the great plague at Milan, this same Litany was constantly to be heard in the different wards of the lazar-houses, strengthening and comforting the last rough passage of the sufferers.

Why do I remind you of all these things? Because, as you have this same Litany daily on your lips, so, if you could but each resolve for herself whatever strength it has given others, that, by GOD'S grace, she would have too. My dearest Sisters, do not deceive yourselves. This is entirely in your own power. That Name is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. It had no value centuries ago that it has not still. It may, if you so will,

be as dear to you as it was to any of those blessed men who once took it so joyfully on their lips, and who now see face to face the King in His beauty. I am persuaded that there are none of you who have not longings—not always equally strong, but sometimes very strong indeed—not to be a whit behind them in their cause. Can there be a better day than to-day to cherish any such? Can there be a better day than to-day to give yourselves again to Him Who is chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely? Than to-day, than this very hour, your hour of especial prayer?

Hear what S. Bernard said to the Sisters of Citeaux: "Not," he says, "that I doubt whether GOD is among you of a truth or not. This I see: this I rejoice and exult to know, O you whom I love so dearly in our LORD. But, when you exert yourselves much, why should you not exert yourselves more? Believe me, if the effort is greater, the comfort is beyond comparison, proportionably greater still. What need I to hear of one angry thought, of one evil desire, of one indulgence in sloth, of one envious word, of one misunderstanding, of one defection to the right hand or to the left? It was not so that our happy brothers and sisters in the old time entered into the Land of the Living. Cry to

Him therefore with all your heart: 'Draw me: we will run after Thee.' And note the humility of the prayer. My weakness Thou knowest: my infirmities are all hid from Thee: I cannot run—run? I cannot even walk—walk? I cannot even stand, without Thy grace; draw *me*, me the least of Thine handmaidens, me the unworthiest, me the lowest, me the most ungrateful: draw me, and *we* will run after Thee. Thou hast given Thy grace to others: they will arise and do Thy bidding: give it to me, that with them I may also rise, with them also run, with them live for Thee, with them live to Thee, with them die to Thee, with them reign with Thee everlastingly."

Is there anything that was said by that great Saint to those servants of CHRIST seven hundred years ago, that I might not say to you now? Have I any new motives to give you? Have I any less strength to offer you? Have I any less dear hope to set before you? No. It is the same prayer: they used it, and so must we: "Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us: and we are called by Thy Name: leave us not." *Thou art in the midst of us.* I cannot but feel that it is so of a truth. I must not doubt GOD'S love and mercy, I must not dishonour this day by forgetting the Almightiness of the Name it

bears, because I know—O how much !—my own unworthiness, and because, my dear Sisters, I know your sins and weaknesses. I could not but feel this morning as to one after another I gave the Living Bread that cometh down from heaven, and the Wine that blossoms into purity, that the text was true. I might have said then: "Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us. By my hands, albeit altogether miserable and unworthy, Thou hast vouchsafed to come among us. Thou seest each of these Thy children kneeling before Thee. Thou knowest their wants: Thou pitiest their weaknesses. Give to *her* that grace which Thou seest her so much to need: give to *her* strength against that temptation by which Thou knowest her to be so much assailed: enable *her* to strive with all her might to keep that resolution which Thou knowest her so earnestly to have made. Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us: Thou hast begun the good work, Thou must perform it. Thou hast loved all these with an everlasting love, Thou must give them more and more love. Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy Name. It is the Name we take on our lips oftener than any other: it is the Name we desire to bear in our hearts beyond all other: it is the Name to which

we keep this day holy, and to which we desire to be ourselves holy: we are called by Thy Name: leave us not."

Yes: this day ought to be a day of strength for us. "The Name of the LORD is a strong Tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe." This is that Tower which GOD planted in the midst of this vineyard, as Isaiah sets forth. And it is worth while to notice in that parable the connection of these two things. It says, "He built a Tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein." If the Name JESUS is our Tower, it is because He trod the winepress alone: because He so loved us as to shed the uttermost drop of His Blood for us: because His having thus, once for all, ransomed us, is the very reason that He will be our safeguard to the end. This day is a day of comfort for us, as it is written in the book of Micah: "For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the Name of the LORD our GOD for ever and ever."

And what follows then? This: "In that day, saith the LORD, I will assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted: and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall

reign over them in Mount *Zion* from henceforth, even for ever."

Halted we all have, in following our Lord: driven out we have all been, from resolutions and determinations innumerable: afflicted we have all been, by the burden of our sins: let us only say, "We will walk in the *Name* of the Lord our God for ever and ever," and depend upon it the prophecy of Isaiah will be fulfilled: "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." This day is a day of courage for us: "Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God;" and be well assured that it will follow, "They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen and stand upright." This day is the day of peace and unity: for it is written in the prophecy of *Zechariah*, "In that day shall be One Lord, and His Name One."

Let us remind our Lord of His own promise: "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward." This is indeed that Prophet that should come into the world: and we receive Him in the Name of Jesus, the Name of prophecy: "He shall be called Jesus," prophesied the Angel of old: "for He shall save His people from their sins."

"And he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward." We do indeed receive the LORD in the Name of a Righteous Man when we hail Him by that Name which, as the prophet says, put away iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

I do not, as a general rule, like to ask you to confine yourselves at this hour to any particular prayer. But to-day it shall be otherwise. As soon as you have received the blessing, I should like each of you to take her Litany, and to go through it slowly and deliberately, and with especial reference to her own needs. Thus, "JESU, most mighty," that is, mighty to protect against temptation: and there you would call to mind the temptation from which you would most desire to be protected. "JESU, most powerful," that is, most powerful to preserve *in* temptation: and then you would recall the means at former times in which He has so delivered you. "JESU, most gentle:" and you would remember how He has led you out of fears and difficulties. "JESU, most patient:" and then, how often He has borne with each of you, ay, even since the time of her last confession. This is the way to fly to that most holy Name; this is the way to give the LORD the honour

due unto His Name; this is the way to say, "Some put their trust in horses, and some in chariots; but we will remember the Name of the LORD our GOD." Ourselves, and one or two others excepted, is there any one, think you, in this place, who has remembered to what this day is holy? Let this your unspoken Litany, then, be a Litany of reparation; let others do as they will, let others say, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," let us, at all events, say in our hearts as well as in our lips, "The LORD'S Name is praised from the rising up of the sun even to the going down thereof." Thus, my dear Sisters, or rather let me now say, my dear children, try to do; and may JESUS that died on the Cross, JESUS, that ascended into heaven, JESUS, that evermore liveth to make intercession for us, accept and bless you!

And now to that same JESUS, Who is taken from us into Heaven, but Who shall so come in like manner as we believe that He went into Heaven, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

SERMON II.*

THE NAME OF BLESSING.

"Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My Name? And He blessed him there."—GEN. xxxii. 29.

WE have come, dear Sisters, once more to your own day: the day consecrated to that Name which gives holiness to every holy name: bestowed by an angel in the act of the greatest wonder that the world ever knew—the Incarnation: itself lifted up in the hour of the LORD'S deepest agony and humiliation—the Passion: and now by right exalted above every name, and, hereafter, that reward which is beyond every reward: "And they shall see His Face, and His Name shall be in their foreheads." We have come to that day; and the same voice which then in the stillness of the night, and by the ford of Jabbok, said, "Wherefore is it that Thou dost ask after My Name?" might still, here, after so many centuries, does still here put the same question to you.

"Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My

* Preached August 7th, Feast of the Holy Name, 1857.

Name?" Truly, dear Sisters, because without continually seeking for that Name, the life, which you have chosen, would be impossible. For this is the Name of One that went about doing all good, and bearing all harm: speaking as never man spake, and answered with—"Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" Well acquainted with fatigue, cold, solitude, coming not to be ministered to, but to minister. Because they who desire most closely to tread in His steps, must also most ardently seek after His Name: for so said the Bride long before, "Thy Name is as ointment poured forth: therefore do the virgins love Thee." Of all Christians, Sisters are they who have most need to have continually in their minds those words of S. Bernard which we heard last night. "Every meat is insipid if it be not sprinkled with this oil; unsavoury, if it be not purified with this salt: it is honey in the mouth; melody in the ear; jubilation in the heart." Or hear how he speaks of it in another place; what he said to those early Sisters of his own order, how still more ardently would he say then, if he could have the glory of his Master, to you now! "Yesterday, we celebrated the Transfiguration of Jesus on the exceeding high mountain: to-day we celebrate

His humiliation in the lowest parts of the earth. Yesterday, what He was with the FATHER He showed by the exceeding brightness of His mortal body: to-day He manifests how His humility, by taking man's flesh, wrought out man's salvation. Yesterday, by His splendour He set forth that which we hope to be: to-day He teaches, by the very sound of His Name, how we ought to live. Yesterday, He displayed the glory that is to be our reward: to-day He makes known the love whereby we may merit to be rewarded. The one in the Country, the other in the way. The one in glory accomplished: the other, in co-operating grace."

"Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My Name?" And you might each of you say, "Because Thou, that knowest all things, and knowest that I love thee, knowest also how miserably weak and unstable I am,—and therefore I seek the Name of all strength: how, over and over again, when I have most firmly resolved against temptation, I yield to it,—and therefore I seek the Name of all forgiveness: because I, who have professed to give up every thing for Thee, have yet so much in my inmost heart that is so unlike Thee, and so far unbefitting Thy Temple,—and therefore I seek the Name of all purity: because I have so many trials and

difficulties,—and therefore I seek the Name of all blessedness." My dearest Sisters, I know that this is what you feel; that this is what you mean. It is not for nothing that, since we last kept the anniversary of this Feast, you have said our Litany so many hundred times, and in such various situations, that I have said it with some of you when, to all human appearance it seemed likely to be nearly the last earthly sound that you would ever hear; that we know our absent Sisters to be at this time remembering, even if in the midst of GOD'S more active work they can only remember, that His Name through faith in His Name must be all their salvation and all their desire. No: as that good man of old said—when the Sisters of that day, labouring in the midst of a naughty and miserable generation, were taunted with the honour they bestowed on that Name,—"To us this Holy Name is a great honour and a singular joy. Over and over again our Sisters name JESUS: above all other things they worship JESUS: before and above all the names of all the Saints they love and adore JESUS, the SON of the Living GOD, Whom ye deride and despise."

"Wherefore is it that that thou dost ask after My Name?" Join it with that which

follows: "And He blessed him there." Where? In the first place, where he had been spending the earlier part of the night in labouring for others: in providing for the safety of his family: in so arranging matters that even if he fell, they might escape. So of you. In hospitals or cottages, where you are working, not for yourselves, but for others—and for others, because they are redeemed by the Precious Blood of Him, Whose Name this day we worship—by sick beds which others have left, in places of danger to which others will not dare to approach—only seek after this same Name, only let it be as close to your affections as those external crosses are to your hearts, and I can prophesy that of you also it might well be said: And He blessed her there.

Jacob was alone. Dearest Sisters, you all know something of that which is the worst of loneliness—isolation among others: where they have no feelings in common with you, no sympathy for you, no understanding of what you are aiming at, no love for those things which to you ought to be dearer than the life itself. Very well: let it be so. That is for this world. There is a world where loneliness is impossible. When that more blessed day of Pentecost shall be fully come, you will be

indeed with one accord in one place. The Apostle tells you the number of those whom he saw in the streets of New Jerusalem—or rather, —language fails him when he tries to tell it— "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." In the meanwhile, that which your dear Lord said of the Father, that you must say of Himself, "And yet I am not alone, for He is with me:" in the meanwhile, of that same Blessed Lord and each of you, must that saying be fulfilled: "So they two went on together." And if that be so, there is but one end and result of such loneliness and isolation: And He blessed her there.

Well: and further, it was night. And even night could not separate the true servant from the True Master. That God Who in the beginning said, "Let there be light, and there was light: and He saw the light that it was good"—that God Who is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all, that God has also said that He would dwell in the thick darkness. He Who by the space of three hours endured the darkness of Mount Calvary, darkness to the body, darkness to the soul,—He did it to this end, that in all the darkness of His people He might be a very present help in time of trouble. The Prophet speaks of this His comfort in con-

nection with the very Name of this day: "Who is there among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of His servant; that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him call upon the Name of the LORD." I have often enough said, and you know very well, dearest Sisters, that plenty of this darkness you must expect, until you come to that land of Goshen where all the ransomed people of Israel have light in all their dwellings. You know that I might change Solomon's words without hurting their meaning, and might tell you that a *Sister* was born for adversity. Think then of this darkness of Jacob: think of the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, and remember that "He blessed him there."

But this was not all. Jacob was in expectation of a terrible struggle. The man that for one morsel of meat had sold his birthright, the fornicator and profane person, he that found no place for repentance, he was advancing towards Jacob, and four hundred men with him. And you know whom, and whose attacks, you must always be expecting. You know how ardently Satan desires to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: you know that a Sister is to be prepared for more temptation than others, just as the advanced post of an army must expect the

most frequent attacks and the loudest disturbances. But of this too it is written, "He blessed him there."

And why? "Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day. And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." There the mystery is explained: there is the light that riseth up in the darkness: there is the victory that overcometh the world: there is the violence by which the Kingdom of Heaven is taken: there is the importunity by which GOD allows Himself to be vanquished. "He blessed him *there*." Those desks must be *your* there, dear Sisters: the scenes of as earnest wrestling as Jacob's, if you would wish to prevail like Jacob: there over and over again you must say, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me: there over and over again you must find this blessed Name to be the strong Tower into which you run and are safe. The old legend goes that when S. Ignatius had played the man in the amphitheatre, and had been torn to pieces by the lions, the Name of JESUS was found written in his heart. What was said of him in an allegory must be true of you in reality: that let whatever lions of temptation come upon you, that Name may be so written in your

hearts as to fulfil that promise, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, yet shalt Thou refresh me: Thou shalt stretch forth Thine Hand upon the furiousness of mine enemies, and Thy Right hand shall save me."

And He that bears that Name is about to come among you in His own presence: to come among you, more truly than when He wrestled with Jacob: to give Himself to you, that you may be one with Him: to bestow Himself on you under the form of Bread and Wine, that hereafter He may give Himself to you amidst the splendours of the Saints. Now then is the time to say: I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me: now is the time, as a prince to obtain power over GOD and over man, and to prevail. The day is breaking even now: that eternal day which ends darkness, solitude, struggle, danger, at once and for ever. This Feast which your LORD makes to you is the twilight of that day: you must wait for its sunrise till you see that Face which was once so marred and defiled for you, but will then be the fountain of everlasting joy: till that Name which has here been your strength and comfort shall then, once for all, and for ever, be written on your foreheads.

And now, &c.

SERMON III.*

THE NAME OF HEALING.

"*Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the Name of* JESUS CHRIST *of Nazareth rise up and walk.*"—ACTS iii. 6.

DEAR Sisters, if I were to begin as the old preachers in the middle ages often used to do, I should say that, with respect to this miracle you had to notice: Who: Whom: What: Where: and Why. Who performed it: on whom it was performed: what it was: where it was wrought: and why it was wrought. In every of one these things there is a lesson for you, not only as Christians, but more especially as Sisters of Mercy.

And to begin with the *Why:* of which the very day calls me to speak. The reason of the miracle was not so much the benefit of the poor man, as the exaltation of our LORD'S Name. I like exceedingly to think that we have now

* Preached September 8th, 1867, being the Second Tuesday in September.

every month a more especial day for remembering and for worshipping that glorious Name: just as it is my joy and pride for you all that you should all be under its protection, as it is written, "The Name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe:" that you should all resolve to make it your boast here, according to that saying, "I will praise the Name of the LORD with a song, and magnify it with thanksgiving:" and as it is my earnest hope that it will be your most lovely reward hereafter: "They shall see His Face, and His Name shall be in their foreheads." That Name which then healed the impotent man, that Name which has been the rallying point of so many a Christian struggle, the last consolation of so many a Martyr, the perpetual support of so many a Confessor, the life-long study of so many a Doctor, the bundle of myrrh so tenderly cherished by many a Virgin-soul, that Name, dearest Sisters, is here, in this House, by our unalterable resolution, to be chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely: that Name is to be the one Name above all others that you are to hear from me, when I speak to you in common here, when I speak to you by yourselves in Confession, when I pray with you; —as it would be the only one Name of which I

should speak if it pleased God that I stood by any of your deathbeds, or of which I should desire to hear if any of you stood by mine. And thus much for the *Why*.

Next, *Who:* Who wrought this miracle? Peter and John. That is to say, Zeal and Love: the Apostle who was always the most forward in word and in action; and he who was the nearest in earthly relationship, and the dearest in love. Peter and John. That is to say, earnest repentance, and unspotted innocence: the Apostle who most grievously denied, who denied thrice, who began to curse and to swear, "I know not this Man of whom ye speak;" and he who, when all the rest fled, came and stood by the Cross, and into whose charge the Virgin Mother was entrusted. Peter and John; the one among the eldest, the other the youngest, of the Apostolic band: the one to suffer by a cruel martyrdom, the other to end his days in peace: both witnesses of the glory of the Transfiguration: both present at the Agony of Gethsemane: both, alone of the Apostles, at the Sepulchre of the Lord: both to be delivered from imminent death, the one from the dungeon of Herod, the other from the caldron of Domitian, by virtue of that Name which to each of them was dearer

than the life itself. And so of you, my dear Sisters; different talents and means of doing good you have: by very different trials you will be purified: different temptations you must expect: but in one thing you must all be alike; The Name of JESUS, as S. Bernard said last night, must be in your heart, and from thence be ready to leap forth to your lips.

Then, *Whom:* on *whom* the miracle was wrought. An impotent man, lame from his mother's womb, and poor; and it was a miracle that not only healed the body, but, it would seem, was healing to the soul. Like Hezekiah, the sign of his healing was that he went into the House of the LORD. Now notice this first. The man was above forty years old; therefore he had been in Jerusalem all the time that our LORD went about doing good, exercising His public ministry, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Put these two things together. He was laid *daily* before the gate of the Temple which is called Beautiful: which gate led into the porch of the Temple that is called Solomon's. Now, only two years before, we read, "JESUS walked in the Temple, in Solomon's Porch." He must then have seen this poor man, must have passed by him, must

have known that he had now been a long time in that case; and yet, no gracious word of kindness, no command of healing: this Priest, this Great High Priest, came that way, and when He saw him, He passed by on the other side. Why? Doubtless out of tender love to the man himself, that the refuge from trouble should come at its *due* time, and not before: but also out of love to His disciples, that they might have so wonderful a testimony to give of their having been sent by Him;—and most of all, because He saw that the glory of His Name would be more increased by the delaying of this miracle till after His Resurrection and Ascension. And so, dearest Sisters, believe me, when He walks among you day by day, as He does in this His most Blessed Sacrament, and still seems to leave some weakness or infirmity in your hearts unhealed, still leaves you a prey to some temptation, still allows Satan to vex and to harass you: what is the reason, but that on the whole, this is for your good, on the whole, this is for His glory? The impotent man shall be made whole in time: the trouble you suffer shall be removed in due season: in the meantime, as the hymn says:

"Now with gladness, now with courage,
Bear the burden on thee laid,

That hereafter these thy labours
May with endless gifts be paid:
And, in everlasting glory,
Thou with joy may'st be array'd."

What the miracle was, we have seen: lameness cured; and the lame man taken, between Peter and John, into the Temple of the LORD. They ministered then to his soul as well as to his body: and therein they left a pattern, dear Sisters, of your vocation. Could there be a more glorious reward of any suffering and labour, than that, as then the lame man entered into the Temple between these two Apostles, so any one of those to whom you had been ministering should hereafter be received into that heavenly Temple, that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, through your instrumentality? You know that nothing could be higher than this: you know that for this any affliction were well endured. Only depend on it, if that most sweet and blessed Name be not in your mouths, as it was then on the lips of those two loving and valiant Apostles, you can never hope for this honour: you can never by any possibility expect to turn any from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to GOD. That Name has lost none of its virtues: that ointment,

poured forth, loses none of its sweetness; by it the same wonder will be done as of old time: by it the spiritually lame will walk and leap when he enters into the Temple of God.

And lastly, *Where:* where the miracle was performed. In the Beautiful Gate—and that, as I just now said, belonged to the porch called Solomon's. My dearest Sisters, these words are as it were written for you, and applicable to none but you. What is the Temple, but that City which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it? for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof: that Jerusalem which is built as a city that is at unity in itself: that place whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord. And, if that blessed abode of the ransomed, that happy and bright dwelling-place of the first-born, written in Heaven, that city wherein dwell the innumerable company of the Angels,—has any porch on earth joined to itself, but not in itself; joined to itself but yet projecting into the care and turmoil of an ungodly world, into the thoroughfare of a careless and earthly life, what can it be but such a Religious House as this? By this, as by a Porch, you trust that some day you will be sent for by the King into

His Chambers: this is the ascent by which Esther must enter into the Palace of King Ahasuerus: this is the vestibule of that House where the Beloved of your heart dwells. And it is Solomon's porch: it belongs to that peaceful King, Who bequeathed peace in the night of His Agony, Who bestowed it on the day of His Resurrection: it belongs to that glorious King Whose riches are the innumerable souls whom by His Precious Death He acquired to Himself: it belongs to that wise King, Who from all Eternity devised that wonderful plan whereby His banished ones should be restored to Him: the only Wise GOD. And then, Solomon's porch had the Gate called Beautiful. Yes: and so those lives of yours, dearest Sisters, must be. Think the dress, when you assume it, ugly, if you will: but resolve with GOD's help that the life of which that dress is a pledge, shall be fair: try so to lead it that hereafter it may be said, "Thou art beautiful as Jerusalem, comely as Tirzah:" that one day you may hear those most joyful words, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee."

But that is not all: there is a far greater mystery than so. You read in S. John: "It was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And JESUS walked in the

temple in Solomon's Porch." Could anything apply more exactly to yourselves? In this house there ought to be a perpetual feast of dedication; you, pledged to Him, you, dedicated to Him, you, sealed for Him, cannot but keep every day holy to Him. And it is a cold and wintry world indeed: heartlessness, bitterness, want of love everywhere: in that, as of old, the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head: in that inn as of old time, there is no room for Him: they reject Him there: they will not have this Man to reign over them there: as He says in the Canticles, His Head is wet with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night: and to you, as to that dear Bride there, He calls to be taken in. Let it be so, dearest Sisters. It is winter there: let JESUS come and walk in this your Solomon's Porch. Walk, not only in His Sacramental Presence in this Oratory, but by His Grace everywhere; this holy and spotless Lamb must be like the poor man's lamb in the parable: that did eat of his own bread and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom. It is well written then, that in Solomon's Porch the lame man was healed: it is well said also, JESUS walked in the Temple, in Solomon's Porch.

And now one thing more. We have none of

us much of this world's goods to offer to our dear LORD. So much more like the Apostles. But now turn your eyes from that earthly Temple, from the wondering crowds, from the lame man healed: fix them on that Heavenly City, on the adoring multitude of Angels, on the Man—Man as well as GOD—Who was once so poor, Whose Feet were once nailed to the Cross, and bear even now the prints of the cruel nails: and say to Him: "Silver and gold have I none, O LORD JESUS: but such as I have give I thee. I have but myself: I have but a heart full of all manner of imperfection, impurity, sin: I have but desires of serving Thee that are sometimes all but lost and extinguished: I have but a love that is oftentimes very cold and listless: nevertheless, such as I have, give I Thee. Every power of my soul, every faculty of my body, I desire them to be Thine: a poor little gift, a poor, miserable, unworthy offering: but Thou wilt not despise nor reject the low estate of the poor. Take me, O LORD, and do with me as seemeth good unto Thee: let Thine handmaid be a servant of the servants of my LORD: a poor wretched gift, but it is all I have: a poor offering, but it comes with love, it comes from love. Thou knowest that I love Thee: an unworthy oblation, but it

is my all: all that a man hath will he give for his life, for Thee, the true life, Thee, the better than life itself. Here I offer and present unto Thee, O LORD, myself, my soul and body: LORD JESUS, silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I Thee! to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee.

And now, &c.

SERMON IV.*

THE NAME OF GLORY.

"*I will praise the Name of the* LORD *most High.*"—Ps. xiii. 6.

FIRST let me tell you of the place, before you hear of the persons, and of the thing done.

A huge, solemn church, but simple and plain to severity: the grand piers and arches towering up without one sculpture or wreath of flowers to decorate them: the glass, colourless and grey, no figures of Saints, no histories of Martyrdoms, no quaint devices or symbols: the building itself of cathedral size, but no tower, no preparations for a tower: the enormous service-books, bound in solid oak, knobbed with the mighty scutcheons of brass, and backed with huge hog's skin, all in plain black letter,—for your decorations, dear Sisters, were not allowed in that Order. So far as you can see,—for it is Matins, and there are but two lights on the Altar, and one by the preacher,—in the deep, deep chancel two rows of monks (there may

* Preached on the Commemoration of the Holy Name, 1858.

be three hundred) in the white habit: their cowls drawn over their heads, for it is intensely cold, the lantern of each on the ground by his side, to be flashed out upon the Antiphonary when the Responses have to be sung:—but now intense silence, while the Abbot, standing in his place, preaches to his brethren.

The church is in the then newly founded Abbey of Citeaux: the Abbot is the last Father of the Church, Saint Bernard.

Ah! dearest Sisters! those days of huge monasteries, those days when thousands of men and women took upon themselves the LORD'S yoke, and bare His burden, are gone in every part of the Church: and, from the very nature of things, cannot return. The piles stood, though all the fervour was fled: Citeaux remained, the place where a few luxurious scholars passed their time in literary indolence: but the life and love and earnestness had gone, before the destroyer swept away the framework; the kernel had decayed, before he also crushed the shell. But ah! dearest Sisters, though of that Abbey not one stone stands now upon another, though, in the neighbouring villages of that part of France, the farm-horses are watered from the stone coffins of those early monks, that of which the Abbot was preaching

remains ever fresh, ever new: will remain to the end of the world: is to be our comfort, our hope, our joy, no less than it was to those Cistercians in the first fervour of their existence: for he was preaching the Sermons we still have on the Name of JESUS.

Dear Sisters, it is a singular pleasure to me whenever the monthly day of our Commemoration of that most dear and blessed Name comes round: a day, I hope, we should not forget, even when we may be for a season dispersed in the service of GOD. And this I have thought: that it might not be without its profit to you, nor yet to me, if on these days I were always to speak to you on that one subject, and no other. No fear of our exhausting its glories: no fear of our coming to the end of its comfort, were we to live together long after the time when, in all probability, the last survivor of us will be returned to dust. Those old Saints of the middle ages, how dearly they loved to set it forth, everywhere, by all means, in every curious work of art: not merely of church art, mind you, but of household and domestic furniture. Go, for example, into many of the farms round here, and notice the fire-dogs that stand in the yawning chimney: how they are wrought at the sides into those most blessed of

all letters, the *I. H. C.*, by which our dear Lord is set forth. Nothing so mean, that it was thought unworthy of this monogram: nothing so glorious, that it was considered unfit to have that excelling glory added thereto. There they taught us the great lesson that I would fain teach you,—"Do everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus." Yes: silver and gold and gems conspired together to mark out this Name on the paten, or the chalice, or the shrine: the manufacturer of Limoges worked it out in his enamel, the art of producing which we are only beginning to recover: in the monastery potteries they burnt it in on their tiles: in convents they embroidered it on chasuble and cope: in the glorious windows of churches the light came in, sanctified, as it were, and hallowed by the Name of the True Light. I know all this very well. But I know also that the poor peasant was encouraged, with his clasp knife, to consecrate his house by carving the same Name on the hutch of his door, or the barge-boards of his roof: the Name of Salvation could never be out of place among the dwellings of those who looked to be saved: the Name which to adore will be the work of eternity, could never be out of place for the meditation and the worship of earth. Then, what hymns did

they not write, the great poets of the middle ages, from the Golden Meditation of S. Bernard, part of which you have now been singing, downwards! What Litanies did they not make in its honour, investing it with every attribute that the heart of man can conceive, all too weakly, all too coldly, to satisfy the intense fervour of their own love! This Saint wrote sequence after sequence in its honour: that Saint composed a JESUS Psalter: and on all hands there came in a flood of beautiful legends, which, told as allegories, or mere tales at first, were by the simple faith of ruder hearers assumed to be, and related as, matters of fact: as that when the blessed Martyr Ignatius had been torn in pieces by the lions of the amphitheatre, this Name was found inscribed on his heart. Then, not content with seeing the same Name in Joshua, the leader of his people to the Land of Canaan, in Joshua the son of Josedech, the noble High Priest, the man "wondered at" of the Jewish Restoration, they saw it also in deeper and more recondite mysteries. In the three hundred and eighteen servants of the Father of the faithful, they saw the three letters, *I. E. S.*, which make up the monogram of our LORD's Name. They took those letters in their later form, *I. H. C.*, or *I. H. S.*, (the

H. being, as some of you may not know, only the long *E* which it is intended to represent,) and in *I. H. S.* some saw the initials of JESUS *Hominum Salvator*: JESUS the Saviour of men: other some, of *In Hoc Signo*, by this sign: in *I. H. C.*, some saw JESUS *Hominum Consolator*: JESUS the Comforter of men: some, JESUS *Hominum Conservator*: JESUS the Preserver of men. And then again, as the great Doctors of the middle ages had each their own especial title, —as S. Bernard was the honey-mouthed Doctor, as S. Bonaventura was the Seraphic, as S. Thomas Aquinas was the Angelic, as Alan of Lisle was the Universal, so for our dear LORD the love of those centuries made a title also, and worshipped Him as the Luminous Doctor.

It would be easy enough to write a whole volume on the history of the worship of this Name of JESUS, and plate after plate might be filled with the devices in which it occurs. But with you, dearest Sisters, I must look at it in another way, as all our salvation, all our desire, the Name to which you are dedicated, the title which you bear. I always trust that, whether here or absent, there is not one of my dearest Sisters who does not daily consecrate her lips by the repetition of that Litany—that Litany which so few times, since we were knit together

as we are, have omitted, and for those few we need that dear LORD'S pardon, Who has not forgotten us, though we have forgotten Him. Take it again in that way, and think how many faithful followers of the Crucified have breathed out their souls with this word on their lips—the last word which GOD grant I may utter myself, the last word, if He allows me to stand by the deathbed of any of you, which I would hear from you. It is this Name, my Sisters, which must sweeten every bitter cup we have to drink: this Name, which must smooth every hard path we have to tread: this Name, which must lighten every labour: this Name, which must soothe every pain. The only Name worth a life-long labour, a life-long suffering, worth life itself: *worth* life! it *is* life: it is eternal life: it is everlasting blessedness. If it pleases GOD to give us means ever to erect our new house, where, as I hope, He may long be served, we will endeavour to have some outward and visible sign in its very fabric that this Name we desire to honour above and beyond all created names: that for the sake of this Name we desire to live: that, in the strength of this Name we hope to die.

And as to these monthly days of its recollection: I trust, my Sisters, that not only in your

Hours you call it to mind, but that all through your prayers it forms, as it were, the base and groundwork of all you say and all you ask. I trust that, while you have been kneeling in the Presence of Jesus, the Name of Jesus, as S. Bernard says, has been meditated in your heart, and has thence leapt into your mouth. It seems as though the Universal Church had not been able to fix on one generally received day for the celebration of such a Feast. Some Churches especially celebrated it on the Circumcision, when it was first given. Some, on the Octave of the Epiphany, and not unfitly. Some, when there were two Sundays after Christmas, dedicated the second to the Name of the Infant Whom Christmas gave; and if there were not, fixed its commemoration, abidingly, to the tenth of January. Some, as our own Sarum use, fixed it on the 7th of August. I have taken some little pains to discover *why* to that day, but, as yet, I cannot tell you.

Well all these commemorations are good: but there is one that is better—one that God grant I always may see here: and that is, the daily and hourly commemoration of that which ought never to be out of our thoughts, and not long together out of our lips: the commemoration of being like Him. O dear Sisters, this

process of being transformed into His Image, is needs slow: and who knows what time may be given us for carrying it on? Who can tell whether you, who are now altogether, may not be now altogether, as for nearly the first time, so for the last? Yes: the command given to Joseph is also given to you. Whatever others may call that dear LORD, *thou* shalt call His Name JESUS. "JESUS, be Thou my JESUS!" was one of the commonest of epitaphs in mediæval times. Thou shalt call Him so, oh how earnestly, in prayer! thou shalt call Him so, oh how earnestly and yearningly, by fixing thine eyes on that Cross, as the dying Israelite on the brazen serpent: thou shalt call Him so, by clinging to Him, oh how entirely, as Peter on the surges of the sea: thou shalt call Him so, by leaning on Him, oh how tenderly and confidingly, as the Bride coming up from the wilderness. "Thou shalt call His Name JESUS." Oh, from how many things we need to be saved! but how, most of all, from that which is most dangerous of all, from ourselves. Think how often your Sister's life is threatened by the taint and corruption of your fallen nature: think how often you need to be saved from your own temper, from your own carelessness, from your own coldness! O blessed Name, thus to

be an antidote against all sicknesses, thus to be an armour against all attacks.

This Name, then, ever in your hearts: this Name, then, often in your lips—but is that all? Is there not something yet more glorious to look forward to? Is there not to be a special honour in the days of peace, as there has been in the time of war? They shall see His Face: and His Name shall be in their *foreheads*. Then, dearest Sisters, the sanctification commenced here will be perfected there. Then the Baptismal Cross will give place to the Bridal Crown, That Name which is, as it were, the Kiss of the Prince, will be the completeness of joy, the fulfilment of hope.

GOD so make, dearest Sisters, this precious Name your shield here, that then it may become your diadem there!

And now, &c.

SERMON V.*

THE NAME OF TRUST.

"*And they that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee.*"—Ps. ix. 10.

To-day comes in well to tell us why we work, and for Whom. And the text says well-nigh all that can be said on the question. "They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee." The question then is, what the knowing that Name means. Knowing involves acquaintance with its history in itself—study of its power as regards others—experience of its strength in ourselves: and the last is worth the two others put together.

Now see how it was first given. To two Saints, by an Angel: but in what different circumstances! To S. Mary, when filled with a joy which no other created being ever knew, or could know; the joy of the message that the Son of the Father, begotten before all worlds, would be her Son, born in time; these were the words, "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus." To

* Preached at S. Margaret's. Evening. Festival of the Name of Jesus. Sunday, 1859.

S. Joseph: racked with miserable doubts, tried with the hardest of all afflictions: the hesitation whether to condemn one whom we have taken to our heart of hearts, and venerated with all our soul; the words again were, "Thou shalt call His Name JESUS." So then, in the extreme of triumph, and in the extreme of desolation, this Name was first heard: no unmeaning sign that from then till now the case would be the same; no joy so great which this Name will not increase, no sorrow so heavy that it will not lighten.

But then go back further, and see where it was given before this. See how the Name Jesus led the children of Israel out to their first battle. Who went out to fight with Amalek? Not Moses, but Joshua. Who was it, that when all others, having sought GOD, had grown weary, and had left the Tabernacle, who alone remained within? "Nevertheless, Joshua, a young man, servant to Moses, departed not out of the Tabernacle." Who was it that first crossed the Jordan, when they went to spy out the land? Again, Joshua. Who, that when all the people fell away, and murmured that they had been led out into the wilderness to die there, remained faithful among the unfaithful, with his, "Let us go up

at once against the land, for we be well able to take it?" And so as we go through the history: Jesus it was that led the people, when the forty years of their wanderings were past, through Jordan: at whose word the walls of Jericho fell down; who drew not back the spear that was in his hand till Ai was utterly destroyed. And again, a thousand years later, Jesus, the son of Josedech, was the High Priest that stood before the LORD, with Satan at his right hand to resist him; that had the filthy garments in which he was clothed—type of the sins of the human race that our LORD took upon Himself—stripped off: when a fair mitre, namely the Crown of Thorns, was set upon His Head, and Himself clothed with the garments of beauty and immortality.

So you see something of knowing the Name as it was in the old times: and what, since the Spotless Lamb has been offered on the Altar of the Cross, has it been to His followers? Of S. Ignatius it is written that, when he had been torn to pieces by the lions, the Name of JESUS was found written in his heart. A legend only, I know: but thus much it teaches, that none of you can fight with the lions of spiritual enemies, unless you have that Name written there, not, as S. Paul says, "With fleshly letters

of the pen, but with the Spirit of the Living God." A hundred times do we hear of its being the last word uttered on the rack, or in the flames, or on the sick bed: do we find it worked into banners, carved as the chief and concluding ornament of the great church or the Altar: as it should be in you, the true Temple, on you, the Living Altar of the Holy Ghost. You know, too, how above all other Doctors of the Church, S. Bernard seemed raised to this very end, that he should beyond others magnify this Name: how, without repeating himself, he poured forth sermon after sermon, all transfigured, as it were, by the love and the fulness of that Name to which they were dedicated. You know how hymn after hymn has been cast into the treasury of the Church, all celebrating this Name only: this Name, than which there is none other under Heaven given whereby we may be saved: this Name, for which our iniquity is to be pardoned: that Name which is so nigh, and that do its wondrous works declare.

But all this is a very poor and imperfect kind of knowing: is not knowing in any real and true sense.

> "Alone who hath Thee in his heart,
> Knows, Love of Jesus, what Thou art."

Of this, you must have the witness in yourselves. You must know how far you are more and more loving, more and more clinging to that Name. You must know how far it only passes over your tongue, and does not go near your heart of hearts. The hours, dear Sisters, during which you kneel or sit by those desks, are only so far worth as they are really given to the knowing that Name, and its consequences: "They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee." How far it is really helping you to fight against the sins that most easily beset you? how far does it make you say, and act out what you say: "I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue?" Of course, where there is victory for the past, there is trust for the future: of course, when you find that in days gone by you did this, or left alone that, which in your own strength you could not have done or left undone, you feel that you can break through present chains, and achieve present victories. But then, O miserable Sister, if she must own to herself that she has no such knowledge! To see day roll by after day, weary task succeed to weary task, hour of prayer to hour of prayer, no hope of change in this world, no happy anticipation of the next. I cannot bear to imagine it possible that such a thing can be; and yet we know it can. We

know how many souls, bound by religious vows, have lost this world for their sake, and by their means, sunk only the lower into Hell. And notice, it is: "They that *know* Thy Name," —not, that knew Thy Name. You know the story how Cromwell, on that fearful death-bed of his, when, if ever any man had his conscience seared with a red-hot iron, his was, eagerly inquired whether he that had once been in a state of grace, could ever fall away, and how, when the chaplain replied, "Neither fatally nor finally," he cried out as if relieved from anguish: "Then I *must* be saved: for I know that I was once in grace." Dearest Sisters, there have been times in which, had it pleased God to remove each one of you from this world, I should have known—so far as mortal man can know anything—that an entrance would have been abundantly administered to each of you into those good things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. But those times will not serve you now: nay, the grace you had then will not do now; because, as you grow on in worldly years, so you must grow in grace. And this is the question of questions for you.

Now I was talking of your rules; and of the

necessity of keeping them not for their own worth, but because without the habit of perpetual obedience your Christian lives cannot be sustained. And you should be glad that it is so. Because you have a real tangible proof, each of you, whether you are trying more and more to serve God. Did you break this by omission, and that by commission, and did your conscience remind you of it, only to be stifled? or did another remind you of it, only to irritate you? or have you spoken angrily or unkindly, or unnecessarily repeated what could do no good, and could make mischief? Well, then: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." In those cases, you are not knowing that Name which is life eternal.

Yes: if you could but tell how much harm sentences do, that you sometimes yourselves forget, spoken in a hurry, spoken carelessly, spoken without any intention or idea of really sinning—how they lie in the minds of those who hear them, festering there, you would indeed pray with all your heart to be delivered from the curse of idle words. "Thou shalt find it after many days," is as true of evil words and works as of good. A marvellous life they seem to have: Satan takes care of those

little seeds of mischief: his influences water them and rear them, till in time to come they bear bitter fruit. I am not speaking at random. I myself have sometimes been astonished that a sentence apparently so trifling, should have remained so long in the mind: should awake after so long an apparent slumber, and should then be so powerful for mischief. Oh, dear Sisters, the hermit Pambo knew something of this, when he professed that the words, "I said, I will take heed unto my ways, that I offend not in my tongue," were enough employment for his life!

It is a perpetual criterion, a touchstone which you cannot put away from you. When a Religious House has stood for many years, and seen several generations of Sisters, its rules may, and sometimes do, become so completely acted on as matters of course, that they form no great proof of the love that each Sister bears to her Lord. But it must be years before that will be the case with any of you. And certainly, in your place, I should exult that I have a thing by which I could continually satisfy myself that I was trying to follow the Man of Sorrows, the obedient Child of Nazareth. And, the more contrary to flesh and blood, the more one would feel disposed to rejoice at a

proof that one was not deceiving one's self; not following cunningly devised fables.

But I rejoice in this thing also. For though I will not deny, dearest Sisters, that I see things in some of you, that may well make me anxious, I yet know that it is only by the help of the Name, exalted above every name, that we continue to this day. He has been thus far with us: He has made straight that which was crooked; He has made plain that which was rough. I know how hard it is to avoid one of two evils—either the so acknowledging what He has wrought, as not to see how often we have failed; or, again, so to concentrate our thoughts on our shortcomings, as not, nevertheless, to say, "Yea, the LORD hath done great things for us already, whereof we rejoice." The very Name, JESUS, ought to teach us better; for in itself it mentions as well that from which we are saved, as that into which we are brought.

There is no legend more common in those brazen figures of mediæval monuments than, JESUS, BE THOU MY JESUS! Take it for yourselves, dearest Sisters. It is the prayer of all prayers for you. Nowhere is the word *my* so sweet as there. I, His poor sinful servant; I, His weak, trembling soldier; I, His unloving, unfaithful bride—He, in each of these charac-

ters, in ten thousand others, He *my* JESUS. Mine to cling to in every difficulty; mine to call on in every danger; mine to be comforted by in every affliction; mine, while I journey through the wilderness of this world, to feed on; mine, when I come to the heavenly land, to go to, embraced in His Arms, satisfied with His fulness, swallowed up in His Love!

And now, &c.

SERMON VI.*

THE NAME OF LOVE.

"By what power, or by what Name have ye done this?"—Acts iv. 7.

It will be some time, in all likelihood, before I have the opportunity of thus speaking to you all again; and so I will take the risk of wearying you, and will say a few sentences to you before we part. The question that we have heard every night this week will give me a good text.

"By what power, or by what name have ye done this?" Done what? Why, in the first place, made your fixed resolution, given yourselves to God, taken up the more heavy Cross, set out upon the narrower way? By your own power? Poor, poor Sister, if it be so; if you think to persevere for one day, for one hour even, in your own strength; if your thoughts are, "I can do this when I will, and if I will." No, indeed. This is what we ought all to learn more and more daily—I am sure we have enough

* Preached in the Octave of the Holy Name, 1859.

to teach us—that we are so weak, so unstable, so wavering; that we are weak, did I say? that we are weakness itself. But then, coupled with the weakness, is the strength that we may have if we will. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Oh, my Sisters, how I could entreat, how I could conjure you, this very day, this very hour, to lay hold on that might; rather, on that Almightiness. Let the past be enough, sometimes to have faltered, sometimes to have fallen. Let the past be enough for Confessions repeating former faults—the same sad list again and again: arm yourselves now for this conflict: resolve that next time you kneel here there shall be a visible improvement, that the grace of God shall witness then to its own effects: that I myself shall perceive that, as of old time, virtue has gone out from Jesus Christ, and healed those whom no earthly physician or remedy can heal. Above all things resolve against those which always have been, and I suppose always will be, the besetting sins of Sisterhoods: unkind thoughts, unguarded words. Both sad indeed: but the former trebly so. It is sometimes more than I well know how to bear to hear or see the unkind fancy that will rankle in one Sister's mind about another. Ah! it is no slight sin. This,

or this, or this, to whom you allow yourself to feel ungently, of whom you perhaps permit yourself to speak harshly—do I mean to say that she is perfect? No. But this I mean; that the King, even at this moment, loves her dearly; that the King, even at this moment, desires her beauty; you may not be able to see it, but He does: you are indulging thoughts of bitterness to one Whom He deems worthy of thoughts of the dearest love. GOD knows—and Him I call to witness—I am not thinking of any particular case; the sin, we all know, is common; not more common here than elsewhere: but sadly common everywhere. One of the hardest trials of a Priest is this: He may know in Confession the earnest struggles, the deep humility, the bitterness of sorrow for sin, the love to her LORD, of one of his children, and may immediately hear her spoken of harshly, or slightingly, or contemptuously, by another of those to whom he is equally bound. And yet he cannot say: "If you could look into that heart as I can, if you could see how broken and crushed it is from causes of which you know nothing: if you could know how lovingly and kindly you yourself have been spoken of by that very one of whom you are now speaking in so opposite a way—you would be touched indeed,

and you would, I know, ask GOD's forgiveness first, and hers next."

By what power, and by what Name can you do this? By that power which forced,—yes, which *forced* the LORD JESUS to tabernacle among men, which compelled Him for all those months, and all the while, conscious (according to His Divinity) of the depth of that condescension, not to abhor the Virgin's Womb,—which *forced* Him, when reviled, not to answer when suffering, not to threaten; which *forced* Him to ascend Mount Calvary, which drove the nails through His Hands and His Feet; and drove far more bitter agony—the sense of rejected effort through His Heart—the power of love. By what name? By what, save that to which we have been sanctifying this week: the Name which only speaks of such love, because it speaks of such sins. The old Names that by right are His—Emmanuel, CHRIST, Messiah, King of Kings, LORD of Lords, are not so dear to us as this of JESUS, because this alone speaks of sins, and love felt in spite of all. Our dear LORD, if we had never fallen, would have been King of kings, would have been CHRIST and Messiah, as the anointed Prince; nay, would have been Emmanuel; for, as I have often told you, the belief of the Church is, that even if Adam had

not fallen, the Son of God would have been incarnate; but Jesus He could never have been. The very fact of man's sin gave Him His dearest Name; the Name so royally prefigured by types and prophecies; the Name so gloriously bestowed, as I said last Sunday, at the moment of greatest exultation, and in the season of deepest anxiety and distress.

That Name, dearest Sisters, is to be your pattern in this matter. I could kneel to each of you, oh! how willingly! if I could thereby persuade you to give up every shade, every shadow of a shade, of unkind feeling towards any Sister. Grant that you are not deceiving yourselves; grant that you see faults in her; grant that your whole heart is set on seeing the Sisterhood perfect, and that therefore you see these faults: but then think of the Name of Jesus. It was our sin that brought out His love. So let it be with you. If you see faults, then love the more. This is one sense of that saying of S. Peter's, that "charity shall cover the multitude of sins." There have been those who have gone through life without ever uttering one unkind word: nay, there are one or two of you, from whom I may safely say that I never heard one, or had any reason to believe in an unkind thought. Why not all? Why not the exception the rule?

Dearest Sisters, what a Paradise this place would at once become, if in one fortnight not a single confession mentioned a single thought of unkindness!

And now the other fault: careless words. By what power, or by what name can you do this? Still by that Name, the Name of Him Who spake as never man spake. And now notice this. It is not as if all the danger lay on one side. There is a possibility of two extremes. There is the possibility of levity, by which I mean that light irreverent way of talking which would not be fitting any Christian woman: then there is the possibility of words which, though not to be blamed in people living in the world, are not for Sisters: and that more especially applies to what might be called gossipping conversation; and then there is conversation that, however fit between yourselves, is not fit in the presence of strangers, or even of our children. You have need to pray with respect to all these, "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips." I cannot but believe that, were you each as anxious for the other's progress as you all ought to be, you would invent some method among yourselves of each checking the other when you heard, or thought you heard, anything of this kind.

Never tell me it is not possible: it ought to be possible. It ought to be possible to give the advice kindly, and to take it, even if you thought it undeserved, without being annoyed. "Am I my brother's keeper?" You know who said that. Yes: you are your Sister's keeper: each the keeper of all: and so you will find in that great day of account. If any one of you goes wrong, in greater or less matters, does not a certain amount of fault rest on the others? It does indeed.

But then, remember, there is an opposite extreme; and that is, such gravity and silence as to be moroseness. And notice this in our LORD. We know how He was a pattern against anything approaching an idle word; but He was by no means silent or ascetic. All gave Him witness, and marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. "The Son of Man came eating and drinking." That is, He did not shut Himself up in Himself. He was fond—I speak after the manner of men—He was fond of conversation; and anything but grave and silent. Here He is your pattern. Not only that those lips of yours should never utter anything unmeet; but that, like His, they *should* utter "gracious words." How is that to be? What tongs from the Altar will

lay a coal upon your lips, and so purify and hallow them? Ah! there is a better petition than that! "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth!" Those lips, in which one word, "Mary!" was so mighty with one that dearly loved Him, let those lips themselves purify yours!

I have spoken very plainly to you, my Sisters, and you will bear with me; you know my one wish: that this place should be the habitation of Saints. By what power, and by what Name? That power which can overthrow all difficulties; that power which I see here daily: I hope, increasingly: although I see not as yet all things subdued to it. And by that Name, which is indeed the Name of all victory; that Name to which nothing is impossible: that Name to which you are dedicated, and which lies, dearly and warmly, in your hearts. Those that are going now, and those that are to stay, I commit them all to the guidance and guardianship of that Name: that, as S. Paul says, those whom I see and those that are absent may stand fast together in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, whether external or internal. O my Sisters, will you not, whether separately or together,

try? separately or together stretch forth your hand for the crown that is within your reach? The bright crown of self-devotion surrounded with its special aureole of chastity? I know you will. I am sure that He Who has begun, will accomplish. Oh that I may be counted worthy, as I have seen and watched you in the days of your temptation and infirmity, so to see you in the time of your perfection and glory.

And now, &c.

SERMON VII.*

THE NAME OF HELP.

"*And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel.*"—Acts i. 9, 10.

It is a remarkable point in our Community, my Sisters, that we should have our two chief festivals so close together;† the one, of the Bride of the Lord; the other, of the Bridegroom of the Virgins: how the one shows the love to the Name above all names; the other, the help of the Name above all names: how the Pearl, in one is the Sought, in the other the Seeker.

There it is: the help on earth: because the journey to heaven. There it is: the assistance here, because the heart there. The Victor, even before He had been received into His Glory, (for they were looking *as* He went up,) remembers,

* Preached on the Festival of the Holy Name, 1863. (?)

† He refers to the proximity of the Festival of S. Margaret (July 20) to that of the Holy Name (Aug. 7).

His dear Promise, and sends, if not as yet *the* Paraclete, yet still two Angels, to comfort His orphans, to make them feel that they are not alone, to give the earnest of the Great Promise which in ten days shall be accomplished fully.

And, my Sisters, notice this. The first Adam had no sooner lost Paradise than there came the promise of the Seed of the Woman that should bruise the serpent's head. The second Adam had scarcely—or rather, had *not*—regained Paradise for Himself, when He takes care that His followers should know how, not for Himself only, but for them, He had won it. Ah, dear Sisters, is not the lesson clear? You, no sooner in battle than He with you. He, no sooner in glory than you with Him. This is the kind of participation between the glorious King and the poor subjects; between the faithful Bridegroom and the too often faithless Bride. He takes your weakness, that He may invest you with His strength; your poverty, that He may endow you with His riches; He becomes the Man of Sorrows, Who hath neither form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him, to the end that you may be perfect in His Beauty which He desires to put on you.

But it is not *every* look after Him that will

serve the turn. Let me tell you a way in which a mediæval Priest speaks of that text to his Sisters: "You say that you do look up. You say that you dearly and truly look up. I believe you. But then, O dear ones in CHRIST, it is fitfully. This festival, that fast, you do keep somewhat in the way that the Brides of the King ought to do. But then you relax—then the watch, for the time, is over: then the lamp, for the season, is extinguished: then the devoted Bride is, if not on the other side, at least not on her LORD's." And then He goes on very strikingly: "You have heard over and over again" (because it was in the Lessons for the second Nocturn of their Patron, S. Agnes,) "that passage of S. Ambrose where he, telling how that Saint was led into the foullest and vilest of abodes, proceeds: 'Close your eyes, Christian maidens; a Christian maiden is dragged into the place of shame. Nay, open them again, Christian maidens: CHRIST's own ones may suffer, but can never be put to shame.' But to be found negligent; to be found gazing up to Heaven, but not stedfastly; to be found calling on that LORD's Name, but not earnestly; to be found allowing the Cistercian dress to enfold every limb, but not really; to be found with a bandlet on the forehead which cared more

for the knowledge of this world than of JESUS CHRIST, and Him Crucified; of such an one S. Ambrose would indeed say, 'Close your eyes,' Christian maidens. She attempts with a half heart that which needs the most entire love of a most entire soul; she, oh miserable failure! thinks that she may give herself partly to Him Who gave Himself, Soul and Body, every power of that Human Soul, every member of that, then mortal, now immortal Body, for her!"

"Why stand ye gazing up into Heaven?" My Sisters: a question indeed for all His followers; the question of questions for you. Not for this reason; not that you should allow yourselves in meaningless, helpless, sentimental expressions of an earthly love to Him Who shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I do not think that this is a besetting fault here. But it is impossible to look at books of devotions intended for Sisters, without seeing how apt, how likely, their users are to run into this error. But the "Why stand ye gazing up into Heaven?" has a very different answer. Any of you who have, for your portion now, work which you would not have chosen as a Sister, while there is work which you would choose if you might have it, who might think, "I could serve our dear LORD better, if I only

had that especial task, and as to my own happiness, it would be tenfold:" such an one should look up stedfastly to see, with the eye of faith, that there her work and her wish will be one; and both, her best: that there, He Who sets her work cannot be mistaken, and that His will will be, in very truth, hers also: and she must look stedfastly, and then she may see a certain reflection of that future task in her present one. The thought indeed arises: "I wish to serve my LORD with all my heart and strength. Weariness, pain, trouble, I long since made up my mind to. But there is this or that task that I know I could throw myself better into. I feel sure I could be of more use: His Service would gain, (for it comes to that,) and my happiness would be complete." Well; and what have some of His chief servants thought and said, ay, and left for us on record in the same way? They were on fire, S. Paul and his companions, to preach the Gospel in Asia Minor. What follows? "Now, when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the HOLY GHOST to preach the word in Asia," (there was disappointment the first) "after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the SPIRIT suffered them not." (Disappointment the second.)

And so much for that class of troubles. Of others, that kind which, doubtless in themselves, are harder to bear, and which those who know little about the matter, would think beyond all comparison so much the more difficult to endure, so much the more glorious if endured well: of them, I need say nothing. But the longer I live, the more I know of myself, and the more I know of you, this I see: that it is a much greater thing in little, trifling, every-day worries, in such disappointments as must occur over and over again in every week of our lives, in the teasing annoyances which we all know, but which it would be very difficult for any of us to describe, that it is far harder in them to do as the Apostles did than in those great matters when we must either have that help or know that we can have none. As there is nothing in nature but may teach us something in grace, a story that I read the other day in a book of travels in Brazil, seems to me exactly to the point. The writer, with two companions, was collecting insects in one of those wonderful South American forests. In the middle of the day, they sat down to their meal. At one and the same time, the one was bitten by a snake, whose poison, unless the bite be treated at once, is mortal; the other happened to have

taken his seat on an ant's nest, and in a moment hundreds of the fighting ants swarmed over him. The man bitten by the serpent, submitted to treatment at once, and in a day or two was well; the other laughed off the idea of any medical care, and in the fever that ensued, very nearly lost his life. I thought when I read that story, if the material dangers were translated into a spiritual meaning, how much there was to be learnt from that account. It is the old story about the little foxes; which, on the whole, do so much more harm to the vineyards than the wild boar or the singular beast.

"While they looked up stedfastly toward Heaven." And I think that scarcely could there be a truer question than that of S. Bernard's, with respect to this very verse. Of how many epochs in our lives, greater or less, of how many actions of our lives, more or less important; nay, of how many of the most common-place events that daily occur, could we have this answer to this question? When did it happen? It happened while he, or while they, were looking up stedfastly towards Heaven. The exact words I cannot give you, but the sense is this. What he believed of those to whom he was then speaking, that any sudden event occurring in the course of their lives, would find them in a

certain way looking up towards Heaven, that most surely I believe of all of you. He goes on; that the looking up *stedfastly* was more than he dared to hope for the greater number of those to whom he was then speaking; and now, joining myself with you and those to whom the question was asked, let us think how, in all likelihood, it would have to be answered.

And now, &c.

LITANY OF THE HOLY NAME.

LORD, have mercy upon us.
CHRIST, have mercy upon us.
LORD, have mercy upon us.

O GOD the FATHER, of Heaven,
O GOD the SON, Redeemer of the world,
O GOD the HOLY GHOST,
O Holy TRINITY, One GOD,
JESU, Son of the Living GOD,
JESU, most mighty,
JESU, most powerful,
JESU, most perfect,
JESU, most glorious,
JESU, most wonderful,
JESU, most dear,
JESU, brighter than the sun,
JESU, fairer than the moon,
JESU, more shining than the stars,
JESU, most admirable,

Have mercy upon us.

JESU, most delectable,
JESU, most honourable,
JESU, most humble,
JESU, most poor,
JESU, most gentle,
JESU, most patient,
JESU, most obedient,
JESU, most chaste,
JESU, Lover of chastity,
JESU, Lover of peace,
JESU, Mirror of life,
JESU, Pattern of Virtues,
JESU, Lover of souls,
JESU, our Refuge,
JESU, Father of the poor,
JESU, Consolation of the afflicted,
JESU, Treasure of the faithful,
JESU, precious Gem,
JESU, Shrine of perfection,
JESU, Good Shepherd of the sheep,
JESU, Star of the sea,
JESU, true Light,
JESU, eternal Wisdom,
JESU, infinite Goodness,
JESU, Joy of the Angels,
JESU, King of the Patriarchs,
JESU, Theme of the Prophets,
JESU, Master of the Apostles,

Have mercy upon us.

JESU, Teacher of the Evangelists,
JESU, Strength of the Martyrs,
JESU, Light of the Confessors,
JESU, Bridegroom of the Virgins,
JESU, Crown of All Saints,

Have mercy, &c.

Be merciful: spare us, JESU.
Be merciful: hear us, JESU.

From all evil,
From all peril,
From Thy wrath,
From the snares of the Devil,
From plague, famine, and war,
From the transgression of Thy commandments,
From the attack of all evils,
By Thine Incarnation,
By Thine Advent,
By Thy Nativity,
By Thy Circumcision,
By Thy Woes,
By Thy Scourges,
By Thy Death,
By Thy Resurrection,
By Thine Ascension,
By Thy Joys,
By Thy Glory,

Deliver us, JESU.

O LAMB of GOD, that takest away the sins of the world,

Spare us, JESU.

O LAMB of GOD, that takest away the sins of the world,

Hear us, JESU.

O LAMB of GOD, that takest away the sins of the world,

Have mercy on us, JESU.
LORD, have mercy upon us.
CHRIST, have mercy upon us.
LORD, have mercy upon us.

Our FATHER which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. Amen.

℣ Blessed be the Name of the LORD.
℟ From this time forth for evermore.
℣ O LORD, hear our prayer.
℟ And let our cry come unto Thee.
℣ The LORD be with you.
℟ And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

GOD, Which hast made the glorious Name of JESUS CHRIST Thy SON our LORD most dear to Thy faithful people, and most terrible to evil spirits: Grant, we beseech Thee, that all we, who worship this Name on earth, may receive in this life the sweetness of Thy holy consolations, and in the world to come, the joy of exultation, and of eternal blessedness in Heaven; through the same JESUS CHRIST our LORD, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, ever one GOD, world without end. Amen.

SERMONS

ON

THE LAST CHAPTER OF PROVERBS.

SERMON I.

THE EXCELLENT WOMAN.

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil."—PROV. XXXI. 11.

IT is but, in truth, another example of the Wisdom of the only Wise GOD, when, at the conclusion of the emphatic book of wisdom, we have the highest pitch to which Christian life in this world can reach, set before us as the crown of all its precepts, as the capital of the whole column. To Jewish eyes, lovely as it must have been, how comparatively low and poor, compared with that interpretation, transfiguration, rather, which sees in it the Religious Life! And in all probability there is yet a most marvellous coincidence regarding its composition, which may not have struck you. The first verse of the chapter tells us that it contains the words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him. Now there has never been any great doubt,

either among Jewish or Christian writers, that Lemuel is none other than Solomon himself. But if so, that mother was Bathsheba. Is it not wonderful then, that He, Who, hanging on the Cross, chose, as two of his followers there, the model of spotless purity, and the pattern of glorious penitence, joining them together, so that all ages might know how He accepts and rewards both, should also have ordained that the triumphant hymn of the Religious Life, the loveliest picture that the Church possesses of chastity, should have been made by one so fallen as Bathsheba, as the wife faithless to her first husband, as the queen who brought a succession of misfortunes to her second husband, and whose one petition to her son led to the petitioner's death? To my mind, it is one of the marvels of Holy Scripture: as marvellous as that the same Bathsheba should stand in the line of the ancestors of our Lord.

I do not know, my Sisters, that we can do better than take this whole account, as God may help us, verse by verse, herein following the pattern of more than one mediæval Priest, speaking to those as closely connected with, and as dear to him as you to me. It is a great sea, like that into which S. Peter threw him-

self; but what matter, if only, like him, we may get thereby to JESUS?

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." One cannot wonder that the poor penitent, who wrote the hymn, should have begun with this. She knew best how the heart of her husband had trusted in her, but not safely. No marvel that she put that as the first great duty and happiness. And, my Sisters, a lesson for us all. You know very well that, in Confession, the rule for a Priest is, with regard to most sins (for there are exceptions), if he finds the penitent hanging back from speaking the whole clear, plain truth, if he finds, for example, a child shrinking at confessing fully, what, to a child, is always hardest, stealing, or a man, what, to a man, is always hardest, lying, to help him on by saying, should he himself have been tempted to either sin, that he knows the strength of the temptation; and should he himself have yielded, to go even further, and persuade a confession, by—"You are only going to tell me what I have been guilty of myself." Something of the same thing may often, my Sisters, be done by you. You may have to persuade a child here, a penitent abroad, to some confession: be glad that, if you are able in this sort of way, to help them, GOD

gives you grace in some little way to make up for the sin to which you would refer. But remember—for this is a ruled point—this help is not to extend to any sin, greater or less, against the seventh commandment: as to that it is perfect silence. But here is an example of what I mean. The case, not an uncommon one, (and it happened only a few weeks ago,) of a child, prepared by a Sister for her first confession, and finding it very hard to speak of one of those thefts to which childhood is so tempted at a confectioner's shop. The Priest gave her, for her penance, to return the penny or so to the seller, at the same time telling her why. She promised eagerly. On his giving her some praise for being willing to do her best, it was, "I could not of myself: but Sister ——— told me she had once taken some sweets, and was told she must confess it, though she knew that she would be severely punished for it—and if she could, I can." That child and that Sister did not belong to S. Margaret's: I could wish they did.

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." My Sisters, you know what the joy is of feeling that the deepest love—the very soul, of any human creature safely trusts in you. The

gift of trust is the precious pearl of all gifts. That gift which enables one to feel: I know that this thing which I have just felt it right to do will seem strange to such and such an one—that, did they know me less, they would think I was playing them false: that others may tell them that I am; and yet I know that they will not have a single doubt, one moment's hesitation, that, spite of all appearances, I am faithful to them.

Then, Sursum Corda. Raise your hearts to that trust here: the perfect earthly, transfigured into heavenly trust. He, Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, He, Who chargeth His Angels with folly, He, safely to trust in you, you knowing yourselves to be what you are? Can there be a more loving, ay, and a more encouraging verse? To Him I have broken my word so many times, my Baptismal vow, my Confirmation vow, my Sister's vow, and yet He trusts me, dearly, manifestly, so that it would be weakness to doubt it: not only because He gives me in the Sacraments His own Most Blessed Body and Blood, His own most dear forgiveness, but because (if not always) often, in these, He gives me a joy and a peace which never could come from myself; often He gives me power

to conquer temptations that I could not possibly, by myself, be victorious over. Weak as I have so often been, defeated as I have so often been, if He does but trust me yet, that is all in all. To be trusted, ought to be victory.

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil." And of what spoil does he here speak? We know, that in one sense, the God of all might, the God of all riches, does stand in need of the One Pearl of great price, does resolve, He, the Stronger, to bind the strong man, and then to spoil his house. Yes: but here is the meaning. He so trusts in the Bride, that He may leave to her the taking of the spoil. The High Priest remains at Jerusalem, interceding: Judith shall slay Holofernes. Barak shall indeed overthrow the host of the Canaanites, but as we heard so lately, it is Jael that shall exterminate Sisera. You, in His Strength, are to bring Him the spoil; He, having given the power, has the right to the glory.

And then it is to be won by you: spoil, not of one kind, spoil, not to be obtained in one way. Not only by you who go out, and so have the privilege of being forced to do Him honour in the eyes of the world even: nor you only who stay at home, and have but the spoil

of work which you would not of your own accord choose, very much against flesh and blood, and sometimes very mean—but all of you have this: the spoil of your own hearts. They spoiled the Egyptians. Ah, me! And in those hearts of yours: in that, whichever it may be, which has least worldly powers, what strength and depth and value in His sight! Think of this for one moment. Think what is that power of love which every true heart has, and which in you, the greatest part of you, must be fixed on Him, or can never, even in its earthly strength, be fixed anywhere. To you, that are vowed to Him for ever, the perfection of earthly love is impossible. Not in one sense. It may be a startling thing to go on with, but so ascetic writers have always taught us, and with manifest truth: that if any one of you, vowed to chastity, love our dear LORD with no deeper, more fervent, more exclusive love, than one of His servants, doing also her Christian duty as wife and mother, then you are not better off or nearer to Him, but the contrary. She has the more drawbacks; if she, carrying weight, equals or distances you in the race, whose moving principle must be the strongest? This is a matter not easy to speak about, but never to be lost sight of.

See, then, first, in herself, each of you, what especial spoil in your own hearts He needs. And here is the difference between that and external spoils. The one, that within, must be a work of time thoroughly to give: the other may be only a work of minutes. How easy it is to fancy—fancy is not the word—to realize, on the one hand, a Sister who may have fought years against some temptation, it may be, against mortal, it may be against venial sin, in herself; and at last is enabled by the grace that can do all things to offer it to Him Who offered Himself on the Altar of the Cross for her: on the other, a Sister who has the opportunity of suffering for a week, a day, an hour, in a way which equally could not be done without grace, but which the general voice of those round her would think so much more glorious! Yet which hereafter will have the better spoil?

I cannot but think that it was a mistake when, in the Western Church, we let the word Confessor come down from its original height of meaning, and signify every Saint not a Martyr. You know that, for four hundred years after our dear Lord, it meant, and only meant, one who, having suffered for His sake, came off with life. Other Saints had their equal memory: but not under that title. When S.

Martin was taken to his reward, the love of his disciples could not bear that, since he was not a Martyr, he should not have the Church's highest title next to that. Who could confess CHRIST more gloriously by his teaching and by his miracles? If GOD's Providence did not give him the opportunity of suffering torture or prison, was that his fault? Thence the name became common to all Saints: in a certain sense most truly; but yet it was again to have a second Order, which sometimes might not be second even to the Martyrs in the blessed company of the Redeemed.

"The heart of her husband." You know, my Sisters, that they, the few, who with a holy boldness—let us piously believe, not over-boldness—have sought into the physical causes of our dear LORD's death, tell us, that simply and really and without any figure of words, its being so much sooner than His enemies expected, was in consequence of the bursting of that heart which had already suffered so much for us. The later mediæval writers ask whether it were by way of type that there was room enough, and more than room enough for all, who would take refuge in the cavern of that Rock. But still that belief joins beautifully on to our hymn here; makes it not only a hymn of praise for the past, but also a

pledge for the future: if that heart, so full of love from its very beginning, when it first began to beat with its separate little life, so, most of all, proved its love at the close, how much a privilege, how much a duty does that involve, the being safely trusted in by it?

And now, &c.

SERMON II.

REAL SERVICE.

"She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."
—PROV. xxxi. 12.

WE will go on to the next verse in this anthem, so to speak, of the royal Lemuel. Need I say, my Sisters, that were I to sum up the dearest wishes of my heart for each of you in the shortest number of words, I could barely choose a text which could better and more fully contain them?

"She will do Him good." Did the marvel of those words ever strike you? She, the poor, helpless, wavering one, so infirm of purpose, so yielding: when she would do good, evil present with her, falling seven times a day, and only able to rise by His help and His grace. He, the standard-bearer among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, the King Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and yet it is she

whose goodness to Him, not He, Whose goodness to her, is here spoken of. This is of a piece with that wonderful expression in the parable of the wedding-garment: "the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King which made a marriage for His Son;" as if it were for the second Adam's sake, no less than it had been for the first's, that the Bride was found.

"She will do Him good." These are good words, spoken by the Truth Himself; and the comfort and help and encouragement they ought to be to you, my Sisters, who can tell? Therefore it is, with that aim, with that hope, that you are banded together; therefore it is that you go out and bear the burden and heat of the day in isolation, and want, and distress. It is to do Him good in His poor, Him, the once poor King, but to Whom now belong the riches as well as the glory and dominion, that in cottages like those in which He Himself was once lodged, you lodge with Him. It is to do Him good in His children, Him the Child of Nazareth, no less than the Ancient of Days: Him, Who Himself took children up in His Arms and blessed them, that you labour in your school. It is to do Him good Who will have the whole or none, that you are (or all is a miserable deception) endeavour-

ing daily to reduce more and more to His entire obedience those hearts of yours which He will have His especial temples. It is to do Him good that you kneel by the side of His ambassador in Confession; it is for the sake of the Royal Ahasuerus that Esther purifies herself with the myrrh of penitence, and the sweet odours of prayer for forgiven sin. Yes; everywhere, at all times, in all circumstances, each of you, if she is true to her Sister's life, is doing Him good, Him the Lord of Heaven and earth, Him the very and consubstantial Word of the Father.

And why? Because in all these efforts, He sees of the travail of His Soul, and is satisfied: He sees the work of Calvary manifesting itself in you; He beholds—not your strength, but His; —not your love, but His;—He sees some faint resemblance of His own being in you. Faint indeed at the best; and what at the worst? Read the life of a Saint like Vincent de Paul, or some of the early Ursulines, and see what such a resemblance *may* be; and then compare it with your own at the very best. We have most of us admired the reflection of the trees and sky on an unruffled sheet of water: and it is lovely, even in an ordinary calm. But I never knew what such a reflection could be till lately.

It was on the lake of Killarney. The crags and sharp splintering pinnacles, and woods, were so mirrored far, far down, that we, in our motionless boat, seemed to be hanging as in a balloon over them; to look over the side made one perfectly dizzy, the depth appeared so enormous. I thought how true an example that was, of the way in which the religious life ought to mirror Him, the Bridegroom of Virgins, as compared to the ordinary ripple of a lake—the commoner setting forth of Christian life.

"She will do Him good and not evil." Now first, remember how much, how awfully much of evil, those especially dedicated to Him might do Him. I know nothing more terrible than to read in foreign papers of the fall of a Sister. The way in which the infidel publications gloat over every detail—triumph in the sad defeat—give every particular to their readers—that teaches one something of the meaning of Nathan's sentence: "Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme." And in the Sisterhoods of our own Church, though never (oh never, thank GOD) in that way, yet by many an action you might do Him evil. You might do so by any such word or action abroad as should make those with whom

you are believe you to have forgotten your calling.

But do not misunderstand me. God forbid that you should ever put on a sort of behaviour or appearance that you think Sisters ought to have. It is a most dear thing to me when I can hear, as I did the other day, of a Sister: "she was the life of the children's party;" and you know not the help it was to those who were doubting about such a service of God.

"And not evil." But then: think each of you for herself. Ah me! how many ways there are in which, unless you work your best, evil must follow. Think, when out, of one action or word of levity: think of one angry word: and, oh my Sisters, what grace you need! what grace you will have if you ask it; ay, and (I have a right to say it) what grace you *do* have, *because* you ask it.

My Sisters, every month, every year, you have as it were an increasing weight of responsibility on you. So many years, in so many places, under so many varying difficulties He has given you strength, wisdom, singleness of heart. Thus of His love He helps you all. See: you know that the Béguines in Belgium take no vow, except that of obedience, while they re-

main in that Sisterhood. And yet, during the four hundred years in which they have existed, none has ever changed her Heavenly Bridegroom for an earthly husband. Nearly twelve thousand have thus entered into rest. Would it be *possible* for any one now—now for the first time—to leave (although they might without mortal sin) the higher for the lower life?

And this I want you to see. Every time that any Sister goes out and returns with nothing but love, and veneration, and thankfulness following her, she rears a little additional barrier against temptation to thoughtlessness, or anger, or what not, for those that shall come after her. Her dear help in that one case brings another stone towards the completion of the spiritual building which, oh how earnestly I trust it! this Sisterhood will be at the end of the world.

"And not evil." But then there is another sense in which we may take this. A most glorious and encouraging meaning. You know what S. Paul says: "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." That is: that if we are really running the race, really fighting the battle, really striving for the crown, our very failures and mistakes will be overruled

to GOD's glory; we can do nothing (even though by itself it might be a drawback) to the hindrance of the truth of GOD, but what that mistake shall be overruled to the furtherance of the truth.

So with regard to you, my Sisters. We must all feel how many and many a time we may have really been trying to do our best, we have been permitted to make a mistake. Do you not suppose that I can look back to a hundred times when, endeavouring to help you in Confession, I now see I was mistaken in the way I took? And even oftener, out of Confession, when I answered you without any previous prayer? Yet I feel confident in His own dear word, that such mistakes, such blunders, shall in the end, work together for good. So each of you, with those whom you have had to lead. If you see how that, in saying this or that, you were mistaken then, what follows? Why, if you said what you said or did in full trust in Him, you *will* do Him good and not evil: you can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

And now something else. This would be a great consolation to me, were I called, as so many of you are, to nurse. Even if it please GOD that you are not successful in the particular

case, being conscious that you have done your best for His sake, it is *good and not evil* still. Of course, none of you should go out without an earnest prayer that God may, if it be His will, give you physical success. Did I ever pray with any one of you, my Sisters, when we were about to send you out, and not ask that?

But it is a thing that you must *not* allow yourselves to be anxious about—not nervously anxious; a thought that you must never give one moment's harbour: "If I lose this patient, I shall do my Sisters harm." No: that is in safer and higher hands. Do your best—first, for the sake of Him that is the Man of Sorrows: next for the sake of the sufferer that is, for the time being, to you, His representative. And if you do this, you *will*, let the result be what it may, you *will* do Him good and not evil. And, on the other side, I can conceive few things so unsisterly, so unworthy of an immediate follower of Him Who, when one word, one command even unspoken might have saved him, suffered Lazarus to perish,—than to blame, even in thought, a Sister who has failed in preserving the earthly life of her patient. It was no great servant of God who was yet wise and true enough to say, Am I God, to kill and to make alive? It was a

true servant of God who said, what you might well take on your lips to your patients: "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

"She shall do him good and not evil all the days of her life." And now for the most glorious of all senses: now for that which turns this verse into such a golden key as shall open to us the Beatific Vision. "All the days of her life." What life? This poor life, weighed down with infirmity, harassed with labours, saddened with troubles? This polluted life, open to temptation, woeful with omitted, defiled with committed sins? This poor transitory life, where the hour's love is succeeded by the day's coldness, where there is the other law striving against the law we would keep, where the clouds return after the rain? *This* the life that is really life? This the service that is true service? No: never believe it.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Bridegroom of the Virgins, Crown of all Saints, so lead these Thy children, so guard these Thine elect, so at last bring Home these Thy Brides, that in the true, the real, the only Land of the living, that in the one everlasting Home, that in Thy presence, the Fountain and Source of all existence, that in

Thy Light when they shall see light, they may do Thee good and not evil all the days of their life!

And now, &c.

SERMON III.*

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST AND OF HIS SAINTS.

"She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh diligently with her hands."—PROV. xxxi. 13.

I CONFESS to my shame that, when I came yesterday to the consideration of this verse, which stands in the regular order of our course, I thought that it could hardly give us enough to think of to-night, and that it might be well to take it in conjunction with that which follows next. So it is that we are apt to slur over passages that at first sight are less clear: so it is that we gauge the deep springs of GOD'S truth by our wretched measuring lines.

"I beheld, and lo! in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain." Ah! and that Lamb stands not more in the midst of the elders and four Living Creatures, and the harpers harping with their

* Preached on the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity, 1864.

harps, than He does in the midst of all the Prophets, in the midst of all the types, of all the psalms, of all the parables: one and all pointing out:

"Him first, Him last, Him midst, and without end."

Some of you know that magnificent picture—by engravings at least you know it—the Adoration of the Immaculate LAMB. There, on a gorgeously vested Altar, stands the LAMB as it had been slain: from the precious Wound in His Side the Fountain of Salvation evermore wells into a chalice, held by an adoring Angel. This Altar rises in the midst of the Paradise of GOD: the ground is spotted with innumerable flowers: here and there are groves of trees that cannot fade: in the far background, the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: and between them and the groves rise, in endless variety, the towers and spires of New Jerusalem. In the opener space, round the central Altar, here you have a glorious band of Martyrs: there, lilies in their hands, the happy Virgins: here again a bright band of Confessors: there, further, Hermits and Religious. Coming up, as it were, to this Paradise, are righteous warriors, who fell, if not for the Catholic faith, at least for justice; saintly Monarchs, who, having judged

righteous judgment here, have obtained eternal mercy there.

So the Lamb is midst of all; and so, oh how well, here, do they of whom the hymn teaches, look to Him! For see what she—she the dear one—she the elect—she the Bride—seeks. Wool, in the first place: then flax. Both materials for garments: each, so marvellously significant of your needs.

"As many of you as have been baptized into CHRIST have been baptized into His death." Here then, in this wool, you have a type of the righteousness which that dear LORD—which that Spotless Lamb—will give all His servants. Not according to that fearful heresy of imputed righteousness: not that they, remaining in their misery and pollution, have the garment of His perfect righteousness thrown over them. But that His grace, His dear help, His most marvellous love, gives them the robe of inherent righteousness; that, because He has made them so, they *are* good; that, because He has purified them, they *are* pure: that He cleanses them first, and then beautifies them; never, never, throws a fair robe round them, while yet uncleansed. Dear Sisters, whenever you are among the poor, whenever they tell you, as they are almost sure to do, unless they have been well taught, of

their being clothed with CHRIST's righteousness, show them what the term, as they use it, means: that it is not real inward purity—but only a sort of external appearance of holiness that the GOD of purity needs. This is the besetting sin of the belief of the poor here—and perhaps one thing which ought especially to teach you how earnest you ought to be in learning, as the Apostle says, to give a reason for the hope that is in you.

A story will sometimes teach a great truth. This is a fact. A minister of the Establishment in Scotland, on entering a living, determined to take the glebe into his own hands. A well-disposed farmer there offered one of his ploughmen to work for this minister, till the glebe should be got in order. The offer was accepted thankfully. Then said the farmer: "Talk, minister, if you have time, to my man about whatever you like in your own way; and proud he will be: but don't talk to him about ploughing or sowing: because, if you do, he will soon see you know nothing about that; and though he is a good body, he is but a stupid body, and he will think, If he does not know about ploughing and sowing, he can know nought." It was very good advice: and this is the moral for you. If you answered those who think themselves great theologians in villages because they have

certain parts of the Bible at their fingers' ends, as you *sometimes* answer in class, it would do more harm than you can easily judge. Of the outside facts of the Bible they can judge generally; of the hidden mystical meaning they can know nothing. But if they see you make a mistake about one, will they believe you as to the other?

This, all by the way. That robe of righteousness you have received; a robe for warmth against the cold of this world: an armour for defence against the enemies of your spiritual life: ay, and a robe that may, like wool, so sadly be spotted and defiled. But what is the other thing you seek? Flax. And of flax, as we all know, is that linen made, which forms the most useful of dresses.

Fine linen is—what? The righteousness of Saints. The wool, then, signifies that which every true servant of the same dear LORD must have; the wedding garment, without which, no entrance to the Heavenly Banquet; the flax means more: that especial self-sacrifice, that more binding self-devotion, that following the Evangelical Counsels as well as the Absolute Rules.

And you may not know this. Of all crops, flax exhausts the land most: the old Latin ex-

pression used to be, *burns* it. Here, in England, a crop of flax obliges the land to be kept fallow the next year. Is not that a wonderful type of the exertion which the religious life needs? that you cannot spend unless you *are* spent? that you cannot be a shining unless you are a burning light? that the fine linen, the righteousness of Saints, involves the terrible expenditure of the earth, whence the plant springs? When, some eight years ago, we had seven or eight Sisters here, I remember that one of my first sermons was on that text, "The burning and the shining light." Ah me! and through so many difficulties, with so much trouble, against so many enemies,—thanks to GOD it has been accomplished!

And that flax, day by day, you have to seek. The wool, in one most true sense also; that you who profess to try for the highest life, may not fall short of others in making the best use (the best according to human frailty) of the foundation grace of all Christian life. The flax: that, cost you what it may, in resolution, first—just as the plant, in its very springing, burns the ground; that, cost you what it may afterwards, just as the raw flax must pass through many a different treatment, before it become the fine linen, so, GOD helping you, it shall be

with you: never mind the labour, or pain, if hereafter you may but lay down before Him the righteousness of Saints.

"And worketh willingly with her hands." If there needs no recondite explanation of this clause, whatever may be said of the two preceding, very solemn indeed is the way in which those great Masters of the religious life put it. I could not dare, here in the Oratory, to speak in the earnest downright way in which a rougher age permitted them to express themselves. But this is something of the sense. You are getting up in the morning. You have said that first Collect which commences your waking day. When you come to wash your hands, think thus (as you most of you in all probability might assume the privilege which it infers): These hands yesterday morning handled the Word of Life; touched, as truly as ever S. John who leant on His breast, or Mary Magdalene, that kissed His feet, the Very and Consubstantial Word of God. This morning, within a very short time, that Word of Life will be handled by them again. In the interval, so much has this right hand written; so much has it, in different ways, performed; so much has it helped, or led, or influenced others. Every touch, whether it were of the pen, whether it

pertained to any other work, was it such as did not, at all events, dishonour that Flesh which it itself had touched? And, my Sisters, perhaps you yourselves would put that question in rather a different chief meaning from that of centuries when writing was almost unknown.

Remember that, next to hasty speeches, or those unworthy of a Sister, hasty or unworthy writing is likely to be the next easiest pitfall. I say this now, in the first place, because they tell us all so with respect to this particular text; but also because I am speaking without the slightest individual meaning, as generally as if you were all strangers to me. I only wish that I could give you the terrible force with which S. Bernard arrays the passage. But, to use a sentence of the same S. Bernard (whose day, as you know, this is), your hearts, if they are bent in earnest on the matter, will interpret my text better than the greatest of Saints could explain it to you.

And, still finding the Lamb in the midst of all things, how, my Sisters, can I think of your hands without remembering His? How can I call to mind the ring which hallows the one, without recollecting the nail which pierced the other; how can I fail to see in the verse written for your teaching, the history of His Passion?

"She worketh willingly with her hands." And what did He do when He spoke of that Baptism; and how He was straitened till it was accomplished? When He called the day of His Passion the day of His joy, and the day of the gladness of His Heart!

And now, &c.

SERMON IV.*

THE FOOD FROM A FAR COUNTRY.

"She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar."—PROV. xxxi. 14.

WE come now in order to the next clause of our anthem. And first notice this. Those who are not accustomed to mystical interpretations of the Old Testament, are apt to call them obscure, difficult, uncertain: anything made to mean anything. But observe: there are many passages in which the literal sense, though undoubtedly it exists, is exceedingly hard to find. For example: "They pierced my hands and my feet, I may tell all my bones," most surely refers to something in the personal history of David; but who shall tell us what? So his resolution: "I will receive the cup of salvation and call upon the Name of the LORD:" we know its dear meaning as regards us; but what was it as respecting him? So that first of prophecies,

* Preached at S. Margaret's on the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son," had a literal, though far lower and obscure signification as regarded the Prophet's own son. And thus here. Most glorious as is the signification of our text as applied to you, in what satisfactory way can we expound if of a Jewish matron?

"She bringeth her food from afar." *Lift up your hearts.* You see that daily manna provided from Heaven: you see that daily feast of fat things made ready, not here, but in the LORD's mountain. For that, as for daily food, you are taught to ask. You may not know that that word, which we translate *daily* in the LORD's Prayer, is to be met with nowhere else —neither in the New Testament, nor in the whole Greek language. It may mean that by which we, in common with the Latin Church, interpret it. It may mean sufficient, as against to-morrow's wants. It may mean, as some have turned it, supersubstantial: that is, bread, providing, not merely for the necessity of the body, but also for that of the soul. It may mean (and very likely does) all these together.

"She bringeth her food from afar." Ah! but what kind of far country is that whence this so dear Food is brought? What kind of Egypt is that whither Joseph's brethren go up to buy

corn, that they may live and not die? Ah, my Sisters! does it not sometimes happen to you, as it did to them, that when you go for this Food that comes from far, your Joseph seems to make Himself strange to you, seems to answer you roughly, seems to speak even as He did at first to her to whom He afterwards said, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt!" Be it so. Then, if so much of the story is true as regards you, one sentence more is: "And Joseph knew his brethren; but his brethren knew not him." Yes! He does know you indeed—knows the exact amount of trial of your faith that you need—of refusal of your petitions that you can bear.

Because He knows you, therefore those seeming refusals, in reality, those dearest hearings, of your petitions. Because He knows you, therefore, you only go on being instant in prayer, and, when the best moment is come: "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt!" "But they knew not Him." No. And when you come to me and say, "If it be so, why am I thus?" is not that simply another example of the same thing? Have I never heard it said,—"If it were in my prayers only that I felt so cold, I should not so much mind: but even in receiving the Blessed Sacrament I have no earnest-

ness?" Yes: so it is with that Food that is brought from afar; so it is with you, so it has been since there were Christians at all; more especially since there were Christian women, most especially since there were Christian Sisters.

But: "Bringeth her food from afar." What is that far place whence comes your every-day Bread—the storehouse of all good things? Let Moses tell you. "The LORD thy GOD bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills:" yes, that river of water of life; yes, the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; "a land of wheat and barley:" you know *that* even now, you who bring your Food from far; "and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil, olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it." That is the land, dear Sisters, whence your Food is brought.

Far in one sense: but oh how near in another! what that Communion of Saints means, how far we are bound by ties, none the less real because invisible, to that spirit-world, we must pass over Jordan before we can realize. I often think, regarding ourselves, that if those dear Sisters who are gone before us, and who have

listened to me as you now, are present with us, as perhaps they may be at this moment, at this moment hear me thus speaking of their world, their pitying comment would be, "Ah! if you did but know! Ah! if you could but tell!"

But first and dearest as that Food is, we must not confine your text to it. That Absolution which, as being medicine, is in one sense food, comes from far, does it not? It does not come from your poor fellow-sinner, by whose side you are kneeling, and in whom you have most probably seen faults greater than you are telling him, those you have seen being but as a drop in the bucket to those you have not. No: I will tell you whence it comes. It comes from a far-off hill, on a far-off evening, in a far-off time. It comes from a hill, till then the hill of shame, agony, death, corruption, called the place of a skull; it comes from a day, one day known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but of which it came to pass, that at evening time there was light. "I will lift mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help:" "She is like the merchants' ships: she bringeth her food from afar."

And yet again. There is another, if lower, sense, in which the food comes from far. The prayers you offer, the hymns you sing, the

books of devotion you use, nay, after their own poor sort, the sermons you hear: how far, far hence in time; how far, far hence in distance, do their sources lie! Perhaps from some quaint mediæval German House, lanes, fields, gardens deep in snow—snow capping the tourelles, snow embroidering the steps of the great central Cross, snow continually sliding from the sharp steep pitch of the roof of the Chapel, you get a prayer which you use in this dear little Oratory at Christmastide. Perhaps from the dog-days of an Andalusian Convent, orange-trees in blossom and fruit together, the glassless shutters everywhere tightly closed, the fountains the only moving, sounding thing in the dead noonday silence, when there was not a breath to stir the lemon-tree or pomegranate bush, you got such music as that—to me so lovely—introit: "Like as the hart desireth after the water-brooks." Perhaps from the Confession, that is, the tomb, built, altar-shape, over the resting-place of a Martyr in the catacombs,—tomb for the Martyr, Altar for the Martyr of martyrs,—poor, plain, unadorned, you get such a hymn as, "O God, Thy soldier's Crown and Guard." Perhaps from some shrine, gorgeous with carving and gold and enamel, and glittering with a hundred tapers, you get

such another as, "He, the Confessor," Prayers, sermons, hymns, classes, all the same thing; all bringing the food from afar.

But now attend to the other clause. "Like the merchants' ships." Why merchants? Because here comes in the parable of the merchantman that bought goodly pearls: here comes in the money which Joseph's brethren took; and in your case, my Sisters, it must be as in theirs, double money, when they went to bring food from afar; here also the little balm and little myrrh, (I know how you wish it was more,) for a present to the Lord of that land.

Because: if, in the first and highest sense, you are to seek that food, it must, in however low and miserable a signification, be bought: because He will not give Himself to you unless you give yourselves to Him. And that, as I was saying to the children this afternoon, not after the fashion of the Samaritans, but rather after the likeness of Araunah: "All these things did Araunah, *as a king*, give unto the king."

And, not merchants only, but merchants' ships. You do not need me to tell you that this going for food is beset with as many dangers and difficulties as ever were encountered by Solomon's ships on their voyage to Ophir. Ah me! and if you get the gold, or some of it,

that Solomon's sailors obtained, I am afraid that sometimes the apes and peacocks come also.

But, to end, the time will come when, if now you have to seek your food from far, it will then always be close at hand. If the manna fell only every morning, and fell, as it were, from so far off, the Tree of Life stands on either side of the river and bears her twelve manner of fruits, one for each month. And what must those fruits be, of the leaves whereof it is written, "and the leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the nations?"

And now, &c.

SERMON V.*

THE BETTER PORTION.

"*She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.*"—PROV. xxxi. 15.

I KNOW nothing more striking than Matins, when sung, in the very few places throughout Europe where they are now sung, in the middle of the night. In their perfection they are to be heard in the Grande Chartreuse. Imagine, in the first place, the intense stillness of that mountain solitude, the desert of S. Bruno: itself twice the height of Snowdon, girt in below with most deep and solemn pinewoods, seamed with ravines and scarred with precipices: but far higher peaks, in their perpetual snow, towering around on every side. Then the long, high, narrow chapel, where you gaze down from a lofty western gallery on the sixty monks, placed stall-wise, looking so ghostly in their white vestments and cowls; each with his dark

* Preached on the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity, 1864.

lantern at his side. The Psalms are sung in the peculiar Carthusian way, so slowly that Sunday Matins take more than two hours; and in perfect darkness, except the faint glimmer from two small tapers on the far-off Altar. But in the Antiphons and Responses the light is flashed from the drawn back door of the lanterns on the great choir books, and then concealed as the Psalm or Lesson proceeds (except, in the latter case, the one lantern of the reader). And then, in the *Te Deum*, the bells of the convent ring out so gloriously in the cold, frosty air—it always freezes at night, even in July, there—so far away from, and above all the haunts of men. And then the wooden sandals of the monks clatter through the lonely cloisters, and for two hours, till Lauds, (for the services are said separately) all is silent. On two different years I have had the privilege of hearing this: and so it is you can understand what Matins really mean. "She riseth while it is yet night."

But now, in the mystical sense, we must compare this verse with one on which I have more than once, I think, before spoken to you. "By night, on my bed, I sought Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not." You have heard, indeed, that in its deepest and dearest sense, that verse is

taken of the highest love, the loved one alone with the Bridegroom of the Saints; the world and all its turmoil and all its glare shut out. But still, the lower meaning couples best with the present text: "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not." And no chance of finding Him on the bed of sloth: He must be sought in a different manner. "She riseth while it is yet night." That is, in the time of trouble, temptation, affliction, worldly darkness, earthly cold, then is the time for the *Sursum Corda!* Think how many of your own sex and vocation have indeed risen while it was yet night! Risen from the deepest and darkest abyss of earthly misery to the dearest and purest vision of Heavenly Beauty. Risen, as if that celestial morning had already dawned, waiting, not *till* the day break and the shadows flee away, but anticipating them. What kind of rising that is, verses which some of you have heard from me before will tell you better than anything else.

"There is a joy in death, when 'tis for love,
That's more than all the joy in all the world.
For the true measure of true love is death;
And what fell short of this was never love.
And therefore, when these tides do meet and strive,
And both swell high, but love is higher still,

This is the truest satisfaction of
The perfectest love:—for here it sees itself
Endure the highest test: and shows its object,
By one intense act, all its verity:
Which by a thousand and a thousand words
It would have took a poor diluted pleasure
To have imperfectly expressed."

That is the rising at night; that is the love of those of whom the world was not worthy: that, in your own several ways, is the love which you, my Sisters, ought to seek after.

And how marvellously that works in with the deed of Him Who also rose while it was yet night! Take the two things together: the fall of the First, the victory of the Second, Adam. We know the sentence pronounced on the First, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." There have been Saints who have taught that these words were not spoken in the sense in which we generally take them: (that, the fruit eaten, Adam should become subject to death both of the body and of the soul:) but meant actually what they said; but that He Who delights in mercy, touched by Adam's repentance, reprieved him. And this is the more likely, in that the threat was not, That self-same time thou eatest thereof, but, In the day that thou eatest thereof,—thou shalt surely die: thereby giving them time

for repentance; just as when the prophecy had gone forth, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown:" yet, because of its repentance, Nineveh was not overthrown. And so it had been prophesied: "Even so must the Son of man be three days and three nights in the belly of the earth." He was not in the grave more than forty hours: and though the usual explanation is that the Jews reckoned the smallest fraction of a day as a whole day and night, yet many a Saint has held that their God had mercy on an unransomed world: had pity on the terrified disciples, ordained to be His first Martyrs and Evangelists, and reversed the conduct of men. Man sometimes keeps his promise to the ear, and breaks it really: always that he may do less than he said; the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, breaks the letter of it, softens the spirit of it. So it was, however, that He arose in the night: not only the physical night, while that Paschal moon was yet high and bright in the sky; but that darkest night of the world when they who loved Him dearly could only say, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." And we may think too of Nehemiah, the restorer of Jerusalem after its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, how he arose in

the night, neither told he any man what his GOD had put in his heart to do at Jerusalem; and how, from that midnight rising came the restoration of the beloved City.

"And giveth meat." There we must almost perforce come back to her of whom each individual Christian soul, and more than others, yourselves, are types. What is the portion that she gives to all, but more especially to you? Truly here that verse comes in, concerning the Householder that bringeth forth out of His treasure things new and old. If you have the everlasting manna which has always fed her children —and that in the highest sense—has not each generation had, according to a lower meaning, the food, as of the day in its day, so of the century in its century? Has not each doubt, difficulty, heresy, outside, only raised up more comfort, strength, support inside? If Arius had not taught that our dear LORD was a Man, superior to other men, but Man only still, should we ever have had His Godhead so gloriously set forth? If, a century later, it had not been denied that He is not only in, but of Two Natures, should we ever have been so magnificently taught of His Humanity? If, later still, heretics had not risen to declare Him possessed of one Will only, not of two distinct

and sometimes different Wills, that of the Godhead and that of the Manhood, should we ever have been instructed as we now are, concerning His sympathy with us? If, nearly one thousand years later, Calvin and his crew had not denied the verity of the Blessed Sacrament, should we ever have had the multitude of volumes written so lovingly on it? And just in the same way, when Satan, weary of attacking the Sacraments turns his main assault against inspiration, the result will be the same: inspiration will be more closely defined, more earnestly believed, more sedulously preached. And observe this: It is in the night that the Virtuous Woman rose, to give meat to her house, and a portion to her maidens. It is, as you have just seen, in the night of persecution and peril that the chief treasures of the Church, whether of prayer or teaching, have been laid up for her children.

My Sisters, I have said far less about ourselves to-night than I did in speaking of any other text in this series. But remember that, in a set of verses that apply both to type and to antitype, both to the mother and daughters, some must seem more closely connected with the one, some with the other. If God spares us to next Sunday, the text will apply nearly altogether to yourselves. Meanwhile, two things more.

The one: See how, even here, the Secular and Religious Life are clearly distinguished. Meat for her household: a portion for her maidens. Ordinary sustenances to common workers; a dearer portion to those nearer; Martha's lot, and Mary's. "Benjamin's lot was five times so much as any of theirs."

The other: What is true of the Church is true of you. You have just seen how she has produced more fruit, how she has laid up more food in the night of her trials and temptations; often, when they have been only trials, sometimes, when her own negligence has been mixed with the sin of others, or the assault of the evil ones; so it ought to be with you. Trials and temptations you know you have had, will have, must have. See then, when they come, whether with perfect innocence on your part, (that may be,) or not without your fault, (that may be also,) they may not help you to lay up food, to treasure up wisdom, to garner in sympathy, for those to whom, when they are tempted, you may be called to minister. "In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." To my mind, there is no more touching proverb than that Spanish one: "You see the water I drink: you cannot see the thirst I suffer." That is: you

see the depth of my fall; the strength of my temptation you can never know. And thus, perhaps, as I was partly saying this morning, no suffering, even though it comes in the direct punishment of sin, is (or at all events, needs to be) lost. "We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." Dymes spoke truly: but he little thought of the infinite comfort which his sufferings, his repentance, his pardon would give to his fellow-sinners to all coming ages. Even in this sense it is true, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

And now, &c.

SERMON VI.*

THE PURCHASED FIELD.

"She considereth a field and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard."—Prov. xxxi. 16.

It is a very remarkable coincidence that, in the very week in which, probably, the title-deeds of our new site will be signed, this text should come; not chosen for the occasion, but in the natural order of our chapter. We have considered that field long enough: God be thanked that He has opened the hearts of others to enable us to buy it! If a good cause wanted a good omen, I should take this verse as one. But a much nobler idea is that which Homer puts into the mouth of one of his Trojan heroes in the battle of the ships. In the full flush of success they endeavoured to hold back Sarpedon by tidings that the omens were unfavourable. He laughs them to scorn, and says, "One best omen there is—to fight for one's country!"

* Preached on the Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity, 1864.

And so I say too; only it is a dearer country that we seek, and a different battle that we fight.

"She considereth a field." "The field is the world." And the Church does but imitate her LORD. He considered this field three times. The first time was at the end of the sixth day of Creation, when He, by Whom the worlds were made, saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. He considered it truly; but He had no occasion to buy it. The earth, in its virgin purity, was then His, and the fulness thereof. On a second day, when it had been stolen from Him, He considered it; this time, from the top of an exceeding high mountain, when he who had come into unjust possession of it showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. He showed them, he chaffered for them; and this was his bargain: "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." But how that true LORD and Master, that most wise Merchantman, rejected the terms, we know. "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD, and Him only shalt thou serve." The third time that He considered the field was also from the height of a mountain; but the moun-

tain was Calvary, and the height was the most blessed wood of the Cross. Thence seeing, as from a watch-tower, the salvation of the elect, that should be ransomed by the merits of His Passion, and the damnation of the sinners, that should perish by their own rejection of Him, and weighing on the balance of the Cross, His own most precious death on the one side, the regaining the world on the other, He concluded to make the purchase; and that great and blessed bargain was ratified when He said, "It is finished! And He bowed His head and gave up the ghost." So did the Bridegroom of the Church: and how does the Bride follow His example? She too has considered the field. It was in those twelve years during which, tradition tells us, the LORD commanded the Apostles to remain together at Jerusalem. Then she went forth to buy it.

And how? In the Martyrology, my Sisters, you hear how. You hear of the rack, the little horse, the scourge, the scorpions, the fire; you hear of the lions, the men worse than lions, the stoning, the gridirons, the red-hot metal chair; and that was the glorious price for a glorious end. That was how the Martyrs bought it. You hear of Christian women, Christian girls, exposed, unclothed, in the amphitheatre to eighty thousand

pitiless and gloating eyes, and then torn to pieces with the scourge. You hear of them carried into infamous dens; and not always, though often, miraculously delivered from them. And that was how the Virgins then bought it. You hear of men languishing long years in prison; hiding in the dens and caves of the earth; you hear of mothers surrendering their children, their babies, to the torture; you hear of those who endured life-long calumny, perpetual persecution; and that is how the Confessors bought it. You hear of long patient years of the Religious Life; prayers almost uninterrupted; dear love to others, dearer to God; of armies of men and women that overran a miserable world, pouring in oil and wine where they could; and that is how the Religious Life bought it. Oh, my Sisters, how much will you all, all as a body, each as a separate bride of Christ, cast into the treasury? As of old, He sits over against it, watching what is cast in. God grant it, oh, God grant it! that concerning my own dear Sisters it may be said, "Many that were rich cast in much."

But, as I have often told you, what is mystically true of the Church, is true also, if of every Christian, most of each of you. Now, what is that field which you are to consider and to buy?

Somewhat like the field of the hid treasure. In this, your field, are three hidden treasures, and their names are Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience. Some of you are still considering this field; with some of you the purchase is made. And how is it to be bought? Ah, my Sisters, it is not that which the world calls most difficult that really is so! It is not so much long, weary watches, miserable isolation, the endurance of squalor, and filth, and of all the accompaniments of poverty, as the holiness that must be in yourselves, if you are able, if you are fit,—ah, my Sisters, if you are worthy—to do these things! I wish any of you who have ever been out to a hard case of nursing, would look back in thought, and see whether her faults immediately arising from that, mentioned at her next confession—or whether the faults arising from home life, in her next subsequent confession, were most numerous. No man taketh this honour to himself. That, in a certain way, is true of your life; as true as, since the new dispensation, it has been of that of Priests. This is what you never can too often think. If you are not increasing in holiness, in purity, in forbearance, in obedience, in sympathy, in all that makes a perfect Sister's life so lovely here at home, you ought to be afraid to undertake it

abroad. Do you know—and I am certain, my Sisters, that you will not think it said unkindly—sometimes when I see the littlenesses and small jars, and meannesses which sometimes are at home, I wonder that God's dear love should so marvellously bless you abroad. My Sisters, it is just because I am not, even in my own mind, alluding to any one particular fault, that I speak so boldly. But why can you not rise above these things? Why can you do in great things so well, and sometimes in little things so badly? I care comparatively little about the wild beast and the singular beast,* however wild the one, however singular the other. But what I do care about is those horrid little foxes. Against the one I could send any of you out without any great anxiety; but as to the other, whenever you kneel by my side in the Priest's room, I always fear to hear of their depredations.

And this: their spoiling the tender grapes. Ah, my Sisters, "*our* vines have tender grapes," naturally brings in the end of our verse. "*With the fruit* of her hands she planteth a vineyard." And see if that be not the old thing over again: "Show Thy servants Thy work, and their children Thy glory." The fruit—not for herself

* Psalm lxxx. 13. Vulgate, "Exterminavit eam aper de silva; et singularis ferus depastus est eam."

now—no, nor yet for any one else now immediately; but for the planting of what shall be precious fruit hereafter. And just see; take the two texts in connection. "Noah began to be an husbandman, and planted a vineyard." So did the Antitype of Noah; the Man, Man as truly as GOD, Who directs the course of His Ark. What came of Noah's vineyard we know; the blessed end of the other vineyard we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. But this is why I put the two things together. Every single action of yours, more especially, my Sisters, every one continued series of action: as, each time that you go out nursing, or each single day that you take the children here, it is planting the vineyard. But whether that vineyard brings forth the grapes which the Lord of the vineyard in Isaiah looks for, or those wild grapes of which he so bitterly complains, that must depend firstly and chiefly, and beyond all other considerations, on your own personal holiness. Only be very sure of this; a bad careless Sister may, to be sure, in one sense be like the barren fig-tree, but in another not so; for if her vineyard does not produce the grapes of which that wine is made, which our dear LORD desires to drink anew in His heavenly Kingdom, then it will—far from producing

nothing—bring forth that poisonous liquor of which we read in the Canticle at Saturday Lauds: "Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps."

And now, &c.

SERMON VII.*

STRENGTH.

"She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms."—PROV. xxxi. 17.

HERE again is one of the verses in our chapter which—to say it with all reverence—does not seem to promise much at first sight, and which I should not have chosen of my own accord. And yet the more one thinks it over, the more one sees what a great verse it is, how, above all things, it has to do with this life of yours.

I have always been struck with that saying of some primitive Bishop who, going to visit some of his flock in time of persecution, when they were in prison, and about to be brought forth in the amphitheatre, found them confined in a guard-house adjacent to a Temple of Victory. It was at Lyons; I have been myself in the temple, now changed into a Church. As he

* Preached 1864.

passed through what was called the *Atrium*, the *nave*, so to speak, of the temple, in the centre of which the image stood, and looked up at the silver effigy with her helmet, and her spear, and the little winged figure of swiftness which she held in her hands: "I do not wonder," said he, "that a heathen man should deify her. I know how impossible without the grace of GOD is Victory."

And so do you, my Sisters, and so do I. And after all, Victory is but another name for the strength spoken of here. Medical men have made, truly or falsely, a calculation of the mechanical power which each pulsation of the heart exerts in driving out the blood to the extremity of each little veinlet. It is something incredibly great, a power to be measured by that which could lift thousands of pounds. But of this I am sure: The longer we all live, the more we know of the various difficulties by which "we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us," the more we learn of the infinite strength of that grace which breaks through them, or tramples them under foot. The more any of us can look into that wonderful thing, a human heart, and some of you, my Sisters, have had as your duty to do it with regard to others besides yourselves, I

think the more we must have felt that the first, inborn, essential principle is weakness. "The evil that I hate, that do I." We know it in ourselves. We, in a more especial manner sworn to GOD'S service, I as His Minister, you as His Brides, yet know how little certainty we can have of ourselves that we shall not yield to any given temptation that may attack us; and in that very knowledge is our safety. When I first was a Priest, (and when I think of this, I may well say,—"So foolish was I, and ignorant, even as it were a beast before Thee,") I used to think that the very strong language the Saints use about their own weakness was to be taken as a figure of speech; that is, as a sort of holy artifice to encourage those who were really so weak.

I remember reading with great delight the treatise of a Bishop of our Church, very celebrated, yes, and holy too, wherein he, combating Calvinism, endeavours to prove, that in that wonderful passage in Romans vii., S. Paul was not speaking in his own person, but in that of an unbaptized Jew. Now I feel, and I suppose we all do, that were those verses struck out of the Bible, we should lose one of our greatest helps. To have a Saint like S. Paul fairly saying, "I am not only tempted, but I fall," and yet

ending so gloriously, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD;" ought to make *us* take courage. That is an ending very much like the passage in Genesis, concerning Adam's most noble faith. GOD had said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." It immediately continues, "Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all *living*." The first far-off view of the restoration of all things, the first faint acknowledgment, "I look for the Resurrection of the dead."

"She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms." Why the difference? Why the so far stronger expression regarding the loins than the arms? Because, miserably imperfect as any holy desires GOD has put into our hearts may and must be, the actions will still further degenerate. Comparatively pure at the source, the stream gathers pollution every mile of its flow. Did that never strike you, my Sisters, in the second Vesper Collect of our Prayer Book, a Collect of unknown age, the gradual and regular diminution of terms "from Whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and

all just works do proceed?" The first idea, holy; the method devised, good; the action itself only just, or right? See. I believe it is almost as useful a thing at the beginning of a day to look forward to what we know or imagine our difficulties will be, resolving in GOD'S strength, how to meet them, as to recall them in self-examination at night. Whenever we have done so in getting up, did we ever carry fully out what we meant? Grant that, apprehending a temptation to anger, or untruth, or whatever else, we resolved: "It shall not be so," and kept our resolution—did we ever fully carry out all the positive good we hoped and resolved to do? I should be only too glad if I thought any of you could answer, Yes.

But about this strength; you know what it springs out of, weakness; you know what it is made perfect in, weakness. Are we to be ashamed of this? I was going to say, GOD forbid! But GOD has already forbidden. "He being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well." "They took Him even as He was in the ship." "He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow." "Him they compelled to bear His Cross." And has not the greatest strength of the Martyrs lain in the hour of their most extreme feebleness? Is it not be-

cause they were weak with the weakness of death, that not only, "Now they are crowned and receive palms," but also that "Their sound went out into all lands, and their words into the ends of the earth." Nay: is not that the especial thanksgiving of the Collect, "O God, Who amongst the other miracles of Thy power, dost bestow the Crown of Martyrdom even on the weaker sex?"

Now, I believe I have read you the verses before, but they are very favourite ones with me, when the Tempter is represented as urging to impatience one condemned for righteousness' sake to imprisonment, to the dungeon, or the cage, and therefore to what the world would call uselessness. Other temptations having been overthrown, the poem ends thus:—

"But the voice cried;—'Once, remember,
You devoted soul and mind
To the welfare of your brethren,
To the service of your kind:
Now, what sorrow can you comfort,
You, who lie in helpless pain,
With an impotent compassion
Fretting out your life in vain?'

"'Nay;' and then the gentle answer
Rose more loud, and full, and clear;
'For the sake of all my brethren,
I thank God that I am here!

Poor had been my life's best efforts,
Now I waste no thought or breath;
For the prayer of those who suffer,
Has the strength of love and death.'"

"She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms." There it is, my Sisters. In what strength did Elijah go to the Mount of God? "In the strength of that Bread." Which Bread? "The Corn of the Mighty, and the Wine that blossometh into Virgins."

And God of His own dear love, grant you all so to go in the strength of your Heavenly Manna, day by day, year by year, opposed or unopposed, faint, yet pursuing, till you come to the true Canaan, in that true and most blessed morrow after your Viaticum, where that Manna shall cease, because you shall eat the Corn of the Land, the Land of the Living.

And now, &c.

SERMON VIII.*

THE SEED OF THE CHURCH.

"*She perceiveth that her merchandise is good.*"—PROV. xxxi. 18.

HERE is another of those coincidences between texts and events. You know that this verse comes in the regular course of our chapter, and yet I had often thought of taking it on an occasion like this. "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good." What is it save the field and the vineyard which she considers and purchases? And observe this, no man perceives what is self-evident. In the very word *perceiveth* there is a certain notion of finding out. Long years roll on. And she, the spotless Bride, perceives that all the blood of all her Martyrs, all the sufferings of all her Confessors, all the labours of all her Doctors, all the purity of all her Virgins, all the self-denial of her brave Religious Orders have not been

* Preached at the Reception of a Sister, 1864.

offered in vain. In those very early ages, she knew indeed that those agonies wrought out the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: she knew that the Conquerors went unto the eternal Feast of Tabernacles, Tabernacles of light and rest; where there was no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain, for the former things were passed away. But she did not so clearly understand that her own victory was dearly wrought out by those very sufferings. She did not understand that ten years after Diocletian had set up his famous monument in record of Christianity destroyed, the Cross would be the religion of the Empire. She did not as yet perceive that the persecutor, instead of her worst enemy, was her truest friend. There is something terrible in the exultation with which, not knowing this, the most eloquent of her early sons, Tertullian, who afterwards, perhaps for his want of love, fell into and died in heresy, contemplates that Judgment-seat, "at which you, who now scourge, torture, burn, mutilate us by the decree of an unjust tribunal, shall then cry and implore for mercy at a most just one, and shall never, never be heard." Think of that, and then think of the "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Well; long since she *has* perceived that the Blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church. Long since she has learnt wherein her great strength lieth: the full meaning of that glorious Spanish proverb: "Who suffers, conquers." "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good." And let us pray, my Sisters, that she who now comes forward with her own merchandise, will some day perceive that it is good. What is it that she comes to offer? She comes to give up her own liberty, her own ease, her own comfort, her own will, to a certain extent, her own safety. A heavy price, the world says. Yes, world, it is. And all for what? For one Cross, one little wooden Cross. But then, of how much comfort, of how much strength, of how much happiness, the life which that Cross symbolises, may be to her, of that the world knows nothing and cares less. But that is not all the merchandise she will have to pay. You all know, and she knows also, that if a Sister's life has its own joys, it has its own terrible struggles and difficulties. These form part of the payment; and their only comfort is that "if the sufferings of CHRIST abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by CHRIST."

Just as we should never hear the Baptismal

service without calling to mind our own Baptismal vow, so, as I have often said, you should never see another Sister received without calling to mind your own reception. I know there must be times when you are tempted to think that after all, your merchandise was *not* good; that after all your religious life does not make up by its comfort for its labour. Mind, I do not mean that you are so much tempted ever to wish to go back from it, but, which is a very different thing, that you had never taken it up. Well: that, no doubt, is partly the punishment of sin, that in so many ways, as Sisters, you have left undone those things which you ought to have done, and have done those things which you ought not to have done; but also it is a trial of faith, and, if a trial, then a privilege.

One fault of several of you I will speak of here; it is only being instant in season. It is the—what shall I call it? recklessness, with which you do not take sufficient precaution against the spread of infection. I know it is not done to show how little you care about it, I know that none of you are guilty of that meanness; but it is pure carelessness. Only remember that if, through that carelessness another should lose her life, it would be a

dreadful punishment; but the sin, for it is a sin, would not be greater. And if by the like any of you should lose your own, you would not die as a Martyr does, but as a character of whom pretty frequent mention is made in the Book of Proverbs; and as Abner did not die. Now do let that be mended. "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good."

And what I would have you ask for our new Sister, that too ask for her here, who is about to put her hand to the same plough, though not among us; and may God grant it be with abundant success. In one sense, she needs your prayers the more, because she will have to do that which is so far harder than to obey, to rule. And for another too, who has *her* merchandise also to offer, not the same in degree, though it ought to be the same in kind as yours, your new Associate Sister, that she too, may find it good.

And then lastly, this is my most earnest prayer, my dearest wish, for all of you; that when all this is over, when the last sands of the hour of each of you are running out, when her good fight has been fought, her good race run, when her eyes are beginning to open to that other world, she may so be carried through that we may say with dear and most earnest

hope, that her Guardian Angel may declare with perfect and most glorious certainty, "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good."

And now, &c.

SERMON IX.*

NIGHT WORK.

"*Her candle goeth not out by night.*"—Prov. xxxi. 18.

We left half this verse last time—and it is well; the other half will be more than enough.

Think of that darkness in which the candle of the Spotless Bride was first lighted. "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." Think of that darkness in which that candle still shines. Think of one Religion, namely Buddhism, which numbers more adherents in its several sects, not only than every form of Christianity, but than all other religions put together; and this one religion is that which offers annihilation as the highest good to the greatest of its Saints—a good only to be gained after myriads of years of self-struggle. But think also, how, again and again, when that light shining in a dark place has almost seemed extinguished, when one heresy after another

* Preached 1864.

has perilled to all appearance its very existence, *they* have sunk down into utter oblivion; and *it* has burnt on steadily, as it will burn till those days when the witnesses shall be slain, and then shall the coming of the Son of Man be.

But, as before, it is not so much of her, as of you. "Her candle goeth not out by night." That very expression involves two things. In the first place, that your whole existence now, truly taken, *is* a night. In the second, that which our dear LORD teaches of S. John Baptist. "He was a burning and a shining light." Shining because burning; no help to others, without some suffering of some kind to ourselves. And it matters little of what kind. I wish you would all thoroughly believe this—or at least show by your deeds that you did believe it. I wish that you would all put as much energy and life and perseverance in your work at home with the children, as you would put into it away from home among the sick. If you think the one less a Sister's work, less dear to our LORD, less demanding your whole heart and soul than the other, you miserably deceive yourselves. I know it is a privilege to be able to show those who are caring for little but the things of this world, who are settled, as the prophet speaks, on their lees, that there is such a thing as

working for another world. But there is also, as S. Theresa says, a privilege in giving up this privilege; a privilege in serving CHRIST where He only can judge of the effort. I may speak boldly about this, because you all know what I think and feel about your cottage nursing. But if that work be harder and fiercer, the return is more immediate, each successive gradation is more perceptible. If you are successful, you will know it, and that in a certain amount of time. But in the Orphanage you may slur over your work, and no immediate effects appear; you may throw your whole souls into it, and no immediate effect either. Perhaps it will appear in the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, that, as you acted in one way, or in the other, so one or more of your children said, in whatever temptation, the *Yes*, that ought to have been *No*, or boldly resisted the tempter. Oh! happy Sister, whoever she may be, of whom, however dull, weary, monotonous, sometimes almost hopeless her task may be, it may be said "her candle goeth not out by night!" We have all of us, hundreds of times, passed over railway junctions. We all know that it needs only one little touch of the switch-rod to determine whether the train, deviating, in the moving, half

an inch this way or half an inch that way, shall, in the afternoon, be running between glorious mountains, with the pure streams dashing down the ravines, and the bright blue sky overhead; or shall come to its terminus in the smoky, fetid, poison-loaded atmosphere of the acres of brick and mortar, that never knew a flower, and never saw the clear sky. And so it will be the little touches you give now that, under GOD, may determine whether your children shall, in GOD'S good time, be developed into happy Christian wives and mothers, or become that, of which, in connection with them, I cannot bear to think. Is not the difference worth conscientious work?

"Her candle goeth not out by night." And then again, you find the old story: those times of listlessness, darkness, deadness. And if taken so, is it, is it a prophecy or a command? In a measure both. When these times come, as come they will, and do, and that often without *any* fault of your own, and often without much, He, your dear LORD, will keep that little bright spot of love and trust and hope alight for you. But then you also, confiding in His grace, must try harder and harder to fulfil that saying of Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

"Her candle goeth not out by night." Now I will tell you of a sense most important for many of us: temptation, not so much of ourselves, as of those who are under our care. To every Priest this ought to apply; and it applies in some measure to such of you, my Sisters, as have charge of the children; or, in ministering to the bodies, know that, as much as in you lies, your duty is to minister to the souls, of the sick. It is this. When a time of terrible temptation comes, (and remember, on the one hand, how a temptation well or ill resisted in childhood will affect a whole life, and well or ill resisted on a deathbed involves an eternity,) when it comes, and the tempted one tries and falls, tries harder, falls harder, and this, again, and again, and again; then, not to let your little candle of hope and comfort and help—(probably the only hope and comfort and help they have from man)—either go out, or burn low. You know one of the first teachings given to a Priest about Confession is that, let the sin of which he hears be never so deep, he is not only not to be hard in words, but not even to let his face show that he thinks it anything extraordinary. And so, with those who, so far, have a Priest's office. There is the difficulty; to steer clear between two opposite

extremes. Not to look on the strongest temptation, be it what it may, if *yielded* to, as only a sickness; we know by the Apostle's words that it *might* have been resisted.

But then, if any one does to a certain extent resist? Suppose, for example, a child had told a lie, we will say, daily, for months or years. Surely, to a certain extent, it is a victory, if a week passes over with only one, or even two, or even three. A miserable victory, true; but by miserable victories we get on to great triumphs. No: such temptations are not mere diseases. But they are the same thing spiritually that physically is an illness, (as any nervous one,) wherein the patient can do much for himself; and the due proportion of blame and encouragement,—when to say, Now you know you could easily have done better, and when to say, It is very, very sad; but after all this ought to encourage you,—is one of the most difficult parts of that "Art of arts," the cure of souls.

And when, either in ourselves or in others, Satan sends a series of temptations, of whatever kind, with perfect fury, there is always one comfort. I can explain what I mean better by a story. In this present sad American war, in the siege of Richmond, the Federals, being the besiegers, without any particular design, but for

the sake of general havoc, seized on, and broke up, a few miles of a particular railway. In a day or two the Confederates massed an enormous force on that particular spot, and drove them from it. The besieging General instantly saw that the besieged must attach some especial value to that railway; he fought for it, and got it again; and the more savagely he was attacked, the more firmly he held on. At last the value came out. Three-fourths of the provisions that entered the besieged city entered by that line.

And so here. Any furious and repeated temptation of Satan shows that that is his easiest road to victory. If we beat him there, the future danger is marvellously diminished. In that wonderful engraving of a man playing at chess with Satan for his soul, Satan's whole attack is concentrated on one piece. He has swept off half the poor player's pieces, himself having only lost two; but the player fixes his eye steadily on that piece, evidently bringing into play all his arts to defend it, and Satan, if looking half triumphant, looks very anxious still.

And remember this, for ourselves and for others: "The just man falleth seven times a day, and riseth again." We are never to doubt, so

long as a poor tempted one can be brought up again resolutely to the battle, no, not though, as we say in our Rule, he had yielded to the same temptation twenty times in the same day. To take another example (and we may learn a lesson from a bad cause :) in the Great Rebellion nothing could withstand the impetuosity and fury of the Royal troops in their first charge. Almost always, down went everything before them. But, when they were disordered, they were defeated. Whereas the trained bands, their enemies, might be thrown into confusion, sometimes brought to all but utter rout, but they could be rallied again and again, and though defeated again and again, at last their perseverance triumphed, as we know, not in one battle only, but in the whole war.

Ah ! that perseverance ! that not letting the candle go out by night ! And the oil, my Sisters, to support that lamp, you know what its name is, and whence it comes. Its name is called *Grace ;* and its original source springs from that Mountain exalted above the hills, whence from those Five most Precious Wounds came the healing of a world.

If we have been speaking of wars, and almost only of war to-night, or, which is the same thing in other words, of darkness, and almost only of

darkness, ought it not to stir us up to long more earnestly for that City which hath the Light most precious, yea, that Vision of Peace, the Heavenly Jerusalem?

And now, &c.

SERMON X.*

THE CROSS.

"*She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.*"—PROV. xxxi. 19.

IT is marvellous under how many different figures in the whole course of the Old Testament, the Cross is set forth. Think for yourselves. From the very beginning; think of the crossed hands of Jacob; of the same Jacob adoring towards the top of his staff; of the Rod of Moses; of the healing of Mara by the tree; of the wood cast into the water, when the iron did swim; of the poor widow that was gathering two sticks; of the spear which Joshua drew not back till Ai was destroyed; and many, and many another symbol of the same Tree of our Salvation. But here we have the type of a different character; here it is the work of the Cross rather than its strength, or comfort, or love; and that work growing under the hands of the Church,

* Preached 1864.

or (as we have taken the whole series before) of the best individual type of the Church, the individual Sister of Mercy.

"She stretcheth forth her hands to the spindle." Ah! and it was not long before the Primitive Church had so to imitate her dear Master by grasping the Cross. "I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof." It was in those early martyrdoms, it was by those ten persecutions, that she wove the robe of glory for her Master. It was by their sufferings of whom the world was not worthy, that not only the fine linen, the righteousness of common Saints, but the royal robes of Martyrdom, of which we shall on another Sunday hear more, were woven for the Martyr of Martyrs. From that time to this, sometimes in more abundant measure, sometimes in less, that distaff, and that spindle, the two beams of the unconquered, and unconquerable Cross, have done their work. In receiving the earthly sufferer, they have clad the Heavenly Conqueror with new glory.

And now to come home to yourselves. See what the phrase is. "She *stretcheth* forth her hands." You remember our LORD's saying to Peter, "When thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." No man taketh this honour of martyrdom

to himself, but he that is called of GOD. The early councils are full of this. If a man voluntarily presented himself to the persecutor, and lapsed, his time of penance was, according to the uses of different Churches, fourteen or twenty-one years: and that, not only for tempting GOD, but for tempting the persecutor himself to sin. If he stood firm, and came off with life,—instead of the honours of confessorship, he still had a penance of three years' separation from the Blessed Sacrament. Only in the one case of his obtaining the crown of martyrdom was he unhesitatingly reckoned among the martyrs, because then it was thought that he must have had a secret call, felt by himself of a verity, if unknown by others.

But, my Sisters, see this. You *do* take this honour to yourselves. Not, GOD forbid! as *of* yourselves. But I mean that you have no external call; that you hear no audible voice as Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee;" that you see no visible form as Gideon, to say: "The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." It is with you, as it is with us, the inward moving of the HOLY GHOST that we trust we have.

And see this. In the one hand she has the distaff, in the other the spindle. The one; the supply of grace; the other, the work effected by that grace; the one, the working out your own salvation, and that—if it may be so—of others; the other, God working in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. And both these things together go to make up the Cross, the source of all strength; the Cross, the symbol of all victory.

"She stretcheth forth." That, as we know, you all, my Sisters, have done. That, your new Sister, whom, with God's blessing, we hope so soon to receive, is even now desiring to do. But is that enough? The text tells you better. "Her hands *hold* the distaff." And there you have that last best grace of perseverance. That grace without which, any or every other, is comparatively worthless; that grace which knows no such danger, as "Ye *did* run well;" need fear no such sad warning as, "Nevertheless, *this* I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love." This must be the great, the crowning comfort of a Priest as regarding his children, if he could say without one shadow of doubt, say it as S. Paul said it, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until

the day of JESUS CHRIST." And that, like every other grace, has its dear beginning in the Cross. If our hands were but nailed to our crosses, whatever they may be, as fast as those Hands were nailed to *that* Cross, how often should we succeed where we now miserably fail! how often conquer where we are now shamefully vanquished! And you all know that it was that grace of perseverance against which the Prince of this world, when he came, directed his last assault as regarded our LORD. He departed for a season from the wilderness; he came again in the Passion, by the mouth, not of Himself but of his agents, with: "Let CHRIST the King of Israel descend now from the Cross, that we may see and believe." And so it not only will, but so it must, be with you, my Sisters. The last temptation, whatever it may be, that shall assail the departing soul of each of us, if we are departing this life in GOD'S dear love, let it be directed against what good, or to what evil it may, will be in effect against the grace of perseverance. Think what it must be to feel that, if we can only hold out a few minutes longer, all will be safe for ever; this one temptation to be the last I shall ever feel; this one peril to be the last I shall ever know. Think of the earnest clutch that would give us of the

Cross ; and then think also of the terrible vigour Satan will throw into the temptation. Great wrath, because short time. What infiniteness of wrath !—what energy of half malice, half despair,—when the time is to be reckoned, not by few years, short months, fleeting days, but by minutes and moments !

You all, I suppose, read the account of the Erith accident. The most striking part of it, to my mind, is that erecting the embankment against the rising of the tide; there some thousand or twelve hundred men worked against time, ramming clay into bags, piling the bags, filling the interstices; and every minute the river was swiftly, swiftly rising ; and if they could not anticipate it, a space of land would have been laid waste, some two or three miles broad, and as long as from here to Brighton. It was a neck-and-neck race. Sometimes the water a little topped the embankment, and began to pour over; but then up rushed picked men, additionally pouring in their clay bags and making good the holes. To those brave men, it was not so much, that if the wall went down, their lives were gone too ; but the devastation of happy cottages, the utter ruin of dear families, the safety of whole villages, all depended on their harder or easier work. Ah ! my Sisters !

never was a better type of temptation! never a better commentary on those words of Isaiah, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him." A standard! and you know what standard. There is but one. The vision of the first Christian Emperor has only been again and again repeated to this day. Constantine's Cross and the legend "In This Conquer," is but the same thing that eighteen hundred years before had been said here, "Her hands hold the distaff."

Some of you know the lovely mediæval legend concerning the Cross: That Adam, when he was fallen sick of the sickness whereof he died, sent Seth to the Cherub at the east gate of Eden, for healing medicine. The Angel gave him three seeds. "Place these," he said, "in thy father's mouth, and when they shall come to their full growth, he shall be healed." Seth, returning, found Adam dead. He did as he had been commanded, and buried his father. Three trees sprang up, oak, aspen, box. When they came to maturity, they were cut down. Out of them was made the ridge beam of Noah's ark; out of them Jacob's staff, with which he passed over Jordan, before he became two bands, and towards which he afterwards

adored; out of them the rod of Moses; out of them the handle of the spear of Joshua; out of them the main beam of the temple; out of them the doorposts of the stable at Bethlehem. What was left, they say, was taken for the Cross. The oak; thence its unconquerable strength; the aspen; thence its leaves tremble for horror ceaselessly; the box (for the title) and thence the everlastingness of the title. I do not know, in the whole of Christian mythology, a lovelier legend; and if it might but teach you a lesson! Not to stretch your hands to the Cross, only as a thing just to be done once, but to grasp it firmly, and that for ever.

The Cross stands; the world turns. Is not that our motto? You know it is. And what can I pray more earnestly, more lovingly for you all, than that amongst all the changes and chances of this mortal life, that Cross may be planted in, as well as hung over, your hearts?

And now, &c.

SERMON XI.*

THE POOR AND NEEDY.

"She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."—PROV. xxxi. 20.

OF course, my Sisters, nothing could be easier than to apply this verse to any Sisterhood, whose end and aim was the service of their LORD in those to whom, for His sake, they ministered. But it would be by far the lower sense—a sense which includes not only Sisters, but every one who professes even to be serving that LORD: not the virtuous woman alone in the mystical sense of the Religious Life, but every woman, her LORD's true follower.

No; the words, Poor and Needy, have a higher, a dearer meaning, here.

You all know the beginning of that Psalm, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy," how it may be taken in three senses. The lower, "Blessed is he"—each one of us—

* Preached 1864.

"that considereth the poor and needy"— the Lazarus of this world; or, "Blessed is He that considereth the poor and needy," namely, He, the Blessed One, the Good Samaritan, Who so considered the poor and needy, as to die for us; or, "Blessed is he"—our own selves, if with faith and hope and love we burn to look on Him—"that considereth the Poor and Needy;" Him, so poor that He had not where to lay His head; Him, so needy, that in the last hour of His life, He, Who had dwelt in cottages while living, was indebted to a rich man for the gift of a grave.

In that sense the Church—in that sense each of you, my Sisters,—must take this present verse.

"She stretcheth forth her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."

Now, for yourselves. That may be true in two senses, may it not? Stretching them forth as Moses did to the Lord, when the fight was going on in the valley, and he, and Aaron, and Hur, were on the mount: or, stretching them forth, as He, your Lord, your Head, the Captain of your salvation stretched them out: by your desire of suffering with Him.

As to that intercessory stretching, one thing will immediately come into our minds. The

number of memorials and of other intercessions which we say. It seems a want of faith—it is a want of faith—to say that I have been sometimes almost amazed how we have gained something we asked for. *That*, if we doubted not, but earnestly believed, our dear LORD's promise, would be the ordinary condition of things. I cannot tell how it may be with you, but if I were asked, at what time I felt most certain that you, in common with me, were best carrying out one of our dear LORD's commands, I should say, (Celebration being out of the question, as so infinitely the highest), that it is when after Sexts on Sunday we are saying those intercessory prayers. "He that watered shall be watered also himself." It is one of the many mediæval interpretations that have a certain holy boldness from which those weaker in faith would shrink, which applied these words to our LORD on Calvary. There He watered us—O how dearly, O how preciously!—with the stream that flowed from His pierced Hands and Feet, from the Crown of Thorns, from His riven Side. "Thou waterest the earth, and blessest it; thou makest it very plenteous." And how is He watered Himself? How, but by the tears of His penitents, like her who washed His Feet with her tears; by the blood

of His martyrs, irrigating the field whence His Church has sprung.

That is one way; but there is a still more practical fashion of stretching forth our hands to the Poor; the Poor King Whose throne was the Cross: so that they may be crucified with CHRIST. "O LORD, take me to die with Thee, for I cannot live without Thee." That was a brave prayer. Now it is no longer in words. "*I said*, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof:" that might be the word without the action, but this is the action, with or without the word, so dear to GOD.

You may see examples of stretching out hands in both senses in the Old Testament. David: "I have stretched out my hands unto Thee," in supplication. Elisha, over the dead child, in imitation.

"She stretcheth out her hands to the Poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the Needy."

Always remember: the expressions, poor, and needy are very different. A man with any amount of earthly wealth may be poor; he can scarcely be called needy. As they say: our dear LORD was poor during the whole course of His life: poor, as regards earthly poverty, poor in that He then —to quote the Faith of the Church with all reverence—that He then became inferior to

the FATHER, as touching His Manhood. But needy, only in that hour wherein He said, "FATHER, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me;" and again, "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And to both these His states, you are to stretch out your hands, are you not, my Sisters?

It comes almost to the difference between bodily and mental endurance. And all of you have both: you, my Sisters, who seldom or never go out, cannot have the terrible work that a certain amount of danger in the patient or patients involves. You, who are almost always out, feel a rest at home, while you are there, which the others do not. My Sisters, I want you to feel this: that home work solely, out work solely, or the two mixed, are but different ways of going up to the Palm Tree; are but various fashions of stretching out your hands to the poor; the poor, perhaps, literally; the Poor, certainly, mystically. But as to the Needy! When He assumed human nature, He assumed all; He bids us stretch forth our hands to render back all to Him. Not work only: that is, or may be, but external; must be partial. But love—that comprises all. As He loved us, and gave Himself for us, so we, loving Him, and giving our whole selves

to Him, fulfil the desire of His heart. As He, once in Sacrifice, always in prayer, offers Himself for His Bride, so she, both in prayer and in sacrifice, continually renews the offering of herself to Him: which is your reasonable service.

And if this be true of the whole Church, how much more of those who are vowed to the Religious Life!

* * * * *

Ah, my Sisters! and you, who have given yourselves wholly to Him, can never stretch forth those hands, but you show them the pledge of your betrothal. Nor He to you, but that He shows how He has engraven you on those hands.

The deep perfect love streaming downwards, the poor weak love flickering upwards, shall some day be perfectly joined; and then, not only of the Church, but of each type of the Church will that be accomplished: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

And now, &c.

SERMON XII.*

WHY ARE YE FEARFUL?

"She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet."—PROV. xxxi. 21.

HERE is another text which, had it not come in regular course, would well have fitted this great Octave. And the lesson is this: the sufferings of the Martyrs; the fearlessness of the Church. In this sense also, out of weakness she is made strong.

Knowing from Whom she has her strength, calling to mind what that strength has done in the days of our fathers, and in the old time before them, she can well say, "Because Thou hast been my Helper, therefore under the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice."

"The shield of His mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet." They are indeed. Day by day we read, as you know, beside the names that have come to us, of ten, twenty,

* Preached in the Octave of All Saints, 1864.

thirty, one hundred martyrs at a time, that have no memory on earth. Day by day, in five or six words, we mass together the agonies of many long hours; agonies which, in some cases, almost make the miracle less, if the GOD Who first gave it was pleased to remove, or at least to blunt the sense of pain, than if it was the enormous strength of grace that trampled it under foot. "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto My Father." And even because He ever liveth to make intercession; even because for them as for Stephen, "He was standing at the Right Hand of GOD," therefore did the triumph come even in those cases where the physical sufferings of the Martyrs of the LORD vied in intensity with those of the LORD of the Martyrs. * * *

And then there is also this to be remembered: the infinite difference that there is between different constitutions in sensibility to pain. We read five or six names in the same text as suffering at the same time and in the same way; and yet there may have been—known only to Him Who putteth the tears of all His Saints into His bottle—a world-wide difference in the pain which each had to resist.

And now, my Sisters, attend to this. "She

is not afraid of the snow for her household; for *all* her household are clothed with scarlet." What, *all?* All to be arrayed, like Daniel, in the scarlet robe, and to have that proclamation made concerning them, that they should hold such an honour in the Heavenly Kingdom? What! all! when of such also it is written, "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of GOD"? In a certain sense, most surely not all, nor even many. But, remeber that the highest of Martyrs reflected but a poor similitude of the Martyr of Martyrs. You know the history of one of the fiercest trials that ever was endured,—that great Confession at Lyons, the very scene of which it is a privilege to have been permitted to visit,—when the slave Blandina, exposed in the theatre, from her red-hot chair, held, by her words, the boy Ponticus firm to the end; how those that confessed with her, when taken back to prison after their tortures, said: "Call us not Martyrs; there is One only Martyr, JESUS CHRIST; we are not His Martyrs, but His poor servants, following Him afar off." Just as they afar off followed Him, so afar off we must follow them in struggling against, not only the ill without us, (that is comparatively easy,) but the ill within. For see the order: the lust of the flesh, the lust of

the eyes, and the pride of life. It is a climax of difficulties; one may be tolerably kept down; another, and yet another has to be met. Well; see how S. Paul speaks even of the first: and the two first passages that come into my mind, I the rather quote, because our translation so far comes short of their full meaning. The one: "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour." *To possess?* Not so; to obtain possession of, to come into it as into a conquered province; that is the true meaning; it is, over again: "Who subdueth my people that is under me." The other: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." But that last clause is miserably inadequate; it is literally, *lead it captive.*

Well then; if S. Paul speaks of what ought to be the lowest temptation, to those trying really to follow our LORD (any how, trying to follow Him closely, trying to follow Him as you do, my Sisters,) what about the higher and more difficult? the lust of the eyes,—intellectual temptations: and worst of all, the pride of life,—spiritual temptation.

Yes, fight your best against all; have scars not inglorious to show from each; still it must be,—Call us not Martyrs; but still it may be, in

the words of that most ancient and lovely prayer, that you may have some small portion and inheritance with the Martyrs; still even of you that may be true, "that *all* her household are clothed with scarlet." "She is not afraid of the snow." And is it not, emphatically, at least, all over Western Christendom, the winter of unbelief now?

Whether these outspoken denials of the Inspiration of Holy Scripture, these throwings of doubt on all that Christian men have hitherto held most holy, may not be the first faint shadow of the towering form of Antichrist, may not be the skirmishes that precede that great advancing army, only GOD knows. But judging from the rapidity with which these developments of unbelief succeed each other, I think it far from impossible that some, at least the younger, of you, may live to see the days of persecution: when, except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall raise up a standard against him." To that Spirit of holiness, of wisdom, and of love, I commend my dearest Sisters: that fighting under that blessed

standard, the Cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, they may attain to be numbered among the mighty and valiant followers of our True David, and enter into His eternal rest, if after great tribulation, yet with their robes washed in the Blood of the Lamb.

And now, &c.

SERMON XIII.*

TRANSFIGURATION.

"She maketh her coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple."—PROV. xxxi. 22.

AH those earliest coverings of the lost Paradise, the fig leaves first, and then the trees in which man hid himself from the face of his Judge! But see how, even here also, GOD has not removed the curse, but turned it into a blessing. Just as thorns and thistles were the threatened punishment of those hands that had dared to touch the Tree of Knowledge, and our dear LORD took of the thorns and wove thereof a diadem of victory, as King: as Pontiff, the Mitre in which He offered up the evening Sacrifice of the world; just as "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," was the punishment, and labour hallowed by our LORD's weariness, if for GOD, is the highest of joy, till we come—if ever we merit to attain to it—to that happy City

* Preached 1864.

concerning which also it is written, "They rest not day nor night;" so, that clothing, the miserable substitute for the lost and glorious robe of innocence, has had more abundant honour put upon it by God, as if He would teach us that, if there shall be no more pain *there*, no more weariness *there*, so neither shall there be any more shame. Think, under the old law, of the High Priest's garments made "for glory and for beauty:" think of the mantle that fell from the Prophet, "as he went up by a whirlwind into heaven:" think how, when it smote the Jordan, the waters parted hither and thither: think of that most blessed garment out of which went forth such ineffable virtue that the twelve years' issue of blood was forthwith stanched; think of that raiment which, on the Holy Mount, was so imbued and overflowing with Heavenly Glory: think of the handkerchiefs and aprons taken from the bodies of the great Apostles, and diseases healed by, and evil spirits flying from, them: think of the undoubted miracles in later times, which not the touch alone, but the garments of the Saints have performed: and think, lastly, of those other clothes; the napkin about the head, folded together in a place by itself, as showing by the separate position of the two, the distinctness of the Two Natures in

the LORD's One Person. And see, in yourselves, how that which in the first Paradise must have been a perpetual remembrance of sin and of shame, is now in you, and in all such as you, the badge of a glorious service; a Sacrament—to use the word in its larger sense—of entire devotion to your LORD: a mark to the world that you are not afraid to confess the Faith of CHRIST crucified, that there is a place and a name in GOD's House better than of sons and daughters; and how it will be that bridal-dress in which you must all slumber and sleep while you await the coming of the Bridegroom.

So it is that GOD stamps all things, if we will but see it so, with His own mark; making His temporal gifts only symbols and earnests of those better things hereafter.

"She maketh her coverings of tapestry." And the allusion is, of course, to the coverings of the old tabernacle: the rougher and coarser outside; the precious materials beneath. And this remember: as that tabernacle was a type of the Church Militant here, so it ought to be a type of each member of that Church, and especially of yourselves. "The King's daughter is all glorious within;" and yet it continues: "her clothing is of wrought gold." Her external glory, visible in the art, in the riches,

in the works she consecrates to God: her internal glory, the way in which she forms her Saints, in the love, wherewith, under the teaching of her Husband, she inspires her Martyrs: in the Wisdom, the only Wise God helping her, wherewith she inspires her Doctors; in the Purity wherewith, by the aid of the God, Whom only the pure in heart shall see, she arrays those who strive for that highest way. And you ought to have clothing of wrought gold too: external work. That work, very often, those whom the world calls its sensible men, will appreciate well enough. But, as we read, that may be nothing in respect of the glory that excelleth. Ah, my Sisters! I have sometimes heard you praised for some action that the world has seen, when I knew, that deep down in your heart, it, in the sight of your Lord, was as nothing compared with some quiet little battle fought in your own souls here,—perhaps partly fought in the Priest's room too! The outside glory of the Church has, we too sadly know, sometimes interfered with, and sometimes seriously injured that internal beauty. S. Bernard, you know, whose zeal for that holiness, without which nothing is of value, could scarcely be surpassed, had, one might say, almost a horror of external decoration. No towers, no stained glass,

no frescoes, no elaborate carvings. That was his theory. The Church, generally, has not adopted it: and it could not save his Cistercians from terrible corruptions. But, my Sisters, that some churches, some orders, rather reversed the text, and made the King's daughter all glorious *without*—that is too sorrowfully true. And what answers to that among you? Why this:—that it is possible so to go on working truly and honestly, for your dear LORD, without the means of grace you need, that you may in yourselves suffer, more than you help others. That must always be a danger in all works like ours: and I tell you that I know it is, lest any of you should think it had been forgotten.

But now: tapestry, silk, purple. Different things enough in themselves; yet having two particulars in which they are all alike. The one, the smallness of that which produces them; the other, the length of time that it takes to produce them.

Tapestry. Think of the little needle, the slight thread, the patient labour, before that thread can become the finished piece.

Silk. Think of the poor little caterpillar, that has too to live through that caterpillar life to the very end, before it can spin the web whence

the silk comes. And, in this case, we have a singular example of what I said. Some ingenious speculator argued thus: This insect that spins the silk, eats nothing but mulberry leaves. It follows then, that since nothing can come of nothing, those mulberry leaves are that of which the silk is composed. Let me, without the intervention of a grub, do more quickly and better, what it does more slowly, and perhaps more coarsely. He gave his life to his proposed invention. He made a sort of silk. But it was almost worthless; and he was forced to own that GOD'S own time, and GOD'S poor little instrument, were necessary to the perfection of what he desired to obtain. That is a story for some of you, my Sisters. Some of you, I think, are a little too anxious to make silk out of mulberry leaves, without the loss of time—without the intervention of any (of what the world would call) mean help. Much dearer, much truer, David's exhortation, "O tarry thou the LORD'S leisure."

And then, the purple. There too, a poor, little, rough-looking shellfish; whence yet the glorious robe of Kings: fit offering to the Martyr of Martyrs. "The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift."

So then, the littleness of the thing is so far

from being a reason that it is not to be a bride's instrument of service, that, all the more, she may therefore thank GOD and take courage. But whether you all do thank GOD and take courage when you have little wearing, slow things to do for Him; whether in that tapestry you do not sometimes do spiritually what you would certainly find fault with your children if they did literally, take long stitches and slur over the work, that is for your own consciences. "Show Thy servants Thy work, and their children Thy glory."

Let us do with all our might what our hand findeth to do. We know not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike for good. The earthly result, if any, may be for other eyes to see; and we can afford to leave it so. Of this matter also it is true. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

And now, &c.

SERMON XIV.*

IN THE GATE.

"Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land."—Prov. xxxi. 23.

It is marvellous how all of Holy Scripture is bound together as with a golden chain; marvellous how widely separated passages will flash light on each other. So here more especially. "Her husband is known in the gates." And we think directly of three manners of sitting in the gates. We call to mind Boaz who sat there to redeem; Eli, who sat there to judge; David, who sat there, while the host passed out before him, by hundreds and by thousands.

And then we think of that True Boaz, Who has a dear and tender word for every Ruth whom He may find gleaning the Corn—the Corn of the Mighty—that lies round the blessed House of Bread; Who, not like him of old, that only gave his young men charge not to touch the

* Preached Third Sunday in Advent, 1864.

stranger, would send if need were, more than twelve legions of Angels to defend any of His trembling ones; Who, not like that unkind kinsman who said, "I cannot redeem the inheritance, lest I mar mine own:" so redeemed it, that He also said, "Moreover Ruth the Moabitess have I purchased to be My wife." And therefore the Forerunner could not loose the latchet of His shoe; for that was the sign of a refusal to redeem. And yet notice in this very thing one of the glorious contradictions of the Passion. Just as they raised Him on the Cross of the malefactor, and He turned it into the tribunal of the Judge, setting the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left: just as they put the reed of mockery into His Hand, and He turned it into a sceptre of iron to dash His enemies in pieces: just as they enclosed Him in a guarded and watched garden, and He opened Paradise to men: just as they crowned Him with thorns, and thereby did but set a fair mitre upon His Head, so also they did loose the latchet of His sandal just when those Blessed Feet were about to be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. "When these things," it might have been said to His followers, "begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your

redemption" is not given up, though the latchet be loosed, but all the more speedily, all the more securely "draweth nigh." Look up to the Tree of Life, bearing that precious Fruit, whereof if a man eateth, he shall live for ever: lift up your heads to gaze on that Head so soon to be crowned with glory and honour; for your redemption, long ago pledged by this True Boaz, draweth nigh.

Or again; we think of our David sitting in the gate, and the people passing on before Him by hundreds and by thousands; passing on to that battle which has to be fought before they can return with the King to Jerusalem; passing each one to his separate battle; passing all together to their common warfare; differently armed, differently clad, in different battalions, but one great host still, terrible as an army with banners.

And I am sure that we, His Priests, ought to hear those words, then addressed to those three worthies, sounding in our ears, as often as in that (which if often a terrible battle-field, is also the) tribunal of mercy, some poor sorrowful and sinful child of our LORD kneels by our side: "Deal gently, for My sake, with the young man, even with Absalom." For My sake, Who for him suffered My Agony and My Cross: for My

sake,. Who have been so gentle with you: for My sake, from Whose only goodness it comes that those words, "I absolve thee from all thy sins," can be pronounced.

And observe something further. It has always been a rule of the greatest earthly generals, that, in no way, in the day of battle, to go into danger themselves, was the greatest encouragement they could give their soldiers. The first Napoleon, for example, in his later battles, when desirous to stimulate his soldiers to the utmost, used to add to the order of the day, "The Emperor pledges his word that he will not himself go under fire." And so, in Jewish times: see how his men, when David had once waxed faint, sware unto him, saying, "Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel."

Ah, my Sisters! how wonderfully, wonderfully like, are earthly and spiritual warfare. Here, in this battle against Absalom, the cry of the army was, "It is better that thou succour us out of the city." What his followers said to the first David, that the Son of David said to His own: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." It is better that He succour

us out of the City; "*the* City that hath *the* foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God." And what else does He now do but succour us from thence? As I have told you before now, Jacob served for Rachel seven years: the number of perfection; our Jacob served for His Rachel, so far as His earthly ministry was concerned, but three and a half. And why? but to show that only half His real work was accomplished when He ascended into Heaven. If He once died to make atonement, He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

"Her husband is known in the gates." And now, think of that sitting in the gates in judgment, as Eli the High Priest; not as the righteous man Lot, vexing his soul in a wicked city. He shall be known then indeed. Known, and that as never before. Known, not only in all His dear love, in the "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" but in all His terrible anger—in the "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." God grant us all, my Sisters, that He may in that tremendous day be dearly known by you!

But now, notice this—and here is where the chief stress of the verse lies for all; but

especially for you. "*Her Husband* is known in the gates." It implies, that He is known as, and because He is, her Husband. It is only the same love that speaks in one of the parables, (that of the certain King that made a marriage for His Son,) as if that Son condescended to receive happiness from, instead of giving it to, every soul wedded to Him; so that early writers have not feared to apply to Him, Very Man, as well as Very God (applying it to the Second Paradise as it was in the beginning said in the First,) "It is not good for Man to be alone."

And if S. Paul especially, in his glorious catalogue of the deeds of faith, points to those who out of weakness were made strong,—and then speaks of the women that received their dead raised to life again; he shows how women, even by those to whom he wrote, were regarded, in their hardest trials, as making their Lord's glory known. But, in such ages of horrible licentiousness, (which yet, so far as men were concerned, were ages of brutal courage,) like the second and third centuries, it must have been difficult to realize what the effect of the mingled courage and purity of the early Martyrs among women, must have had on the heathen mind. When S. Agatha, so horribly mutilated, could yet say calmly, "Yet I shall not be less

beautiful in the eyes of my Heavenly Bridegroom;" when S. Faith, in her martyrdom, where her bedstead, like Og's, was a bedstead of iron, only of red-hot iron, was firm to the last; when her Priest, S. Caprais, had not courage (I should say, grace) to stand by her till just the end, though then he did, and died, if less gloriously, still nobly—it was only a proof how "The LORD chose new wars."

But if we wanted further testimony, we might take it from that Arch-scoffer, Lucian, who lived in the third century, and ridiculing all thought of virtue, laughing at the idea of immortality, lived on, and wrote on (and we have his works), till he was ninety-eight; when he was torn in pieces by a pack of hounds. We have his works; and to Christian scholars they are almost invaluable: not, poor wretch, as he would have deemed; but because they show what the clever men of heathendom, believing nothing themselves, then thought the weakest, or most provoking, parts of the faith. While he writes about Christian men, with the wit which Satan helped him to, parodying the glorious promises in the Revelation "To him that overcometh," he keeps his temper; and one can conceive that, to a Pagan, his jokes would be amusing. But, when he speaks

of Christian women, what they did and what they suffered, he writes in a passion; with pure scurrility; in a way that never could have been amusing to any one. It shows what he minded most. Satan, probably, because he had first overcome a woman, was the more enraged that women should so overcome him. But it shows, "Her Husband is known in the gates, when He sitteth among the elders of the Land."

And think what that Land is, and what those elders are. A good Land, as Moses says, and a large: large enough to contain the countless numbers of the redeemed; good: so that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love Him." Then, my Sisters, see what it is you are, or profess to be, trying to do. In that good Land, so necessary to be fought for by all, so hardly to be won, you are trying for the Goshen. And Him Who sitteth in the Gates, you are trying to make known. On the one hand, terrible responsibility—on the other, O unspeakable joy!

And then, to take the verse in yet a different sense: at those gates which lead to, or shut

out from the Heavenly Kingdom, you all will have, in GOD's own time, to present yourselves.

Will He, Whom so many of you can already call your Husband, Whom the rest hope so to call: will He so be known as regards you, that His passport of love will admit you there, where once received you can never go out—and so shall you ever be with the LORD?

And now, &c.

SERMON XV.*

THE GLORIOUS TRAFFIC.

"She maketh fine linen and selleth it: she delivereth girdles unto the merchant."—PROV. xxxi. 24.

"THE fine linen is the righteousness of Saints.' So by the mouth of the Apostle the words of the Wise Man are established. And this then is the end and aim of the whole work of the Church—to make Saints.

Think then of that fine linen in which, from the time that His body was wrapped in fine linen, His servants have been arraying themselves to this day—will array themselves till the end of all things. Think how often it has, in a miserable and naughty world, been spotted, sorely spotted. How the few in Sardis that have not defiled their garments are but a type of the few, the units here and there, that have never lost their Baptismal grace; how the rest, over and over again, have had to drink of the

* Preached on the Fourth Sunday in Advent, 1864.

brook in the way; have had to resort to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness; have again and again washed their robes, and made them white, in the Blood of the Lamb. And then think of that other multitude, clad in white robes, and palms in their hands; robes, those, that can never more be defiled; palms, those, which can never fade; a song, that, which can never jar with discord, never sink in weakness, never end through weariness.

As that verse says:

"Though one is now our strain, yet our voices wander wide,
The faltering chant is broken, and brethren strive and chide;
But there is no division within that Temple wall
In which we are to worship through the best time of all."

There will be the completed work of the Church: when her children that shall merit to enter into life, shall come out of great tribulation, yet *shall* come; out of much weakness, out of grievous falls, out of sore distress, but *shall* have come; when the vessel shall enter the harbour with shattered cordage, rent sails, like that famous ship of old, undergirded, and using helps, yet *shall* enter it; when the army shall march in at the gates of eternal peace, weary, straggling, faint, with torn banners, with bemired accoutrements, hung on to the very last

by the foe, yet *shall* march in: "and so shall we ever be with the LORD."

And, my Sisters, as always, what the Church does for all, each of you must try to do for herself. "She maketh fine linen." How often do I remind you, that if you are not, each of you, increasing in your own inner holiness on the whole, and, in long periods, sensibly, though you bestowed all your strength and tenderness on the poor, and though you had all faith, so that you could remove mountains, it would profit you nothing. One of those times is now at hand at which, even if you would, you could hardly fail to look back over an intervening space of time,

> "And mark what progress you have made,
> And where your powers have been decayed."

It only wants a fortnight, as you know, to the renewal of your vows.

"And selleth it." And yet how can that stand together with "Of Thine own have we given Thee?" How sell, and yet give? How make a bargain about our own poor, wretched, little, good deeds, with the Fountain of all Grace, the Giver of all glory? Not so. But He, accepting those two mites, out of His princely liberality gives us a hundred thousandfold more; because, my Sisters, you offer Him

this or that little effort; this or that overcome temptation: this or that temper resolutely stifled in the heart, and not permitted to express itself in words; this or that jealousy, which to suppress in yourselves is the truest victory. And He, He Who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; He, Who is without sin; He, Who has said, "Unto him that hath shall more be given;" will He not help you? And He so helping you, is not this a sale, a glorious sale indeed, wherein you give Him all your weakness, and He in return gives you all His strength? You give Him your many temptations, He gives you His many graces. You give Him your fear and sorrow, He gives you His everlasting strength, and what ought to be the prelude of His everlasting joy. You know the old story in the Trojan war: how the one chief changed with another his armour of iron for armour of gold. You may call that a sale, if you will. O, happy sale for those that receive such gold!

"She delivereth girdles unto the Merchant." It is well said, The Merchant. We know what Merchant that is. He that went about seeking for goodly pearls. "Who, when He had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that He had, and bought it." That pearl, so worth-

less in the sea; that pearl, so inestimably dear in His eyes, because He had made it, and would redeem it, that He went and sold all that He had—and we know what that cost Him—and bought it. He went and sold all that He had. He went—went about doing good; went about suffering evil; went about working miracles; went about preaching and teaching, and finally sold for us all that His Human Nature had, condescending even to the Pavement, to the ascent of Calvary, to the Cross—and bought it.

But now see in how lovely a sense we may take the last clause of all. "She delivereth girdles unto the Merchant." The key-note of that is in the hymn of S. Peter Damiani, which I have many times quoted to you:

> "Christ, Thy soldiers' palm of honour,
> To this city bright and free,
> Lead me, when my warfare's girdle
> I shall cast away from me;
> A partaker in Thy bounty
> With Thy blessed ones to be."

That is, as each one of her children puts off that girdle of their warfare, She, the Spotless Bride, delivers it in to Him Who will reward its having been bravely worn. And think what that is, as one after another goes out of the battle into the peace; out of the race into the

rest, that the girdle, which he then shall need no more, shall be delivered to One Who knows, yes, knows better than he himself did, how much it cost to wear it. "Are not these things noted in Thy Book?" And here we have the answer. And still it is the Merchant. (But what a glorious Merchant!) Who will so recompense every effort here; Who will so, not only sympathise with, but reward every struggle here! We know very well that, let us have done our very best, we are unprofitable servants; but not so will He, for Whom it is done, account it.

And now, &c.

SERMON XVI.*

STRENGTH AND HONOUR.

"*Strength and honour are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come.*"—PROV. xxxi. 25.

IT is almost impossible, my Sisters, and, were it possible, it would not be well, to come back to you, after a short absence like this, without looking forward to a day which must come, GOD only knows when, but which we know will surely come, when, leaving you with the intention of being absent, it may be for a few weeks, it may be for a few hours, I shall, unknowingly, have left this dear Oratory, and this dear house, for the last time of all. This has to do with the text, as you will see presently; but if it had not, that thought about myself, and the like thought, (so far as it may be true,) of each of you, ought to make us remember all the more how the night cometh, when no man

* Preached January 22nd, 1865.

can work; how, if our dear Lord said, in His Human Nature, with that glorious fulfilment both for it and for His Divinity afterwards, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day," so we, trying to tread in His footsteps, trying to follow His example, are bound to say it now: I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day. You know that pretty verse of the Dedication Hymn of a House like this:

> "But in time the earthly beauty
> Of this Convent must grow dim,
> Other lips shall sing the service
> Of the daily chanted hymn;
> For the work at which we labour
> Is the work of mortal men,
> And we all must learn the limit
> Of the threescore years and ten."

But now see what the text tells us. "Strength and honour are her clothing." As to the strength: you know the story of that aged bishop, S. Paulinus, who so gloriously confessed Christ with the other Lyonnese martyrs in the Amphitheatre at Vienne; how when he was dragged into the temple of the goddess Victory to sacrifice, and had refused to throw incense on the altar, he said to his Christian companions: "If I could worship any of the gods of the heathen, which are but devils, it

would be this; for, victory over any evil, what marvellous grace it shows!"

I do not know, my Sisters, that I ever think of any uninspired saying oftener than that; it may be because I have had the privilege of entering—you must go in on all-fours to do it—the dungeon, or den, in which, after his glorious passion, he, at the age of ninety-six, won his victory.

It does not speak, I know, of victory in the text. But strength, in that sense, is equivalent to it. Not human strength, no; not though mixed up with most true love; witness S. Peter. But, strength: and notice, it does not say *her* strength; but strength; which does only, can only, come from the grace of GOD; and that *is* victory.

Yes, it is victory. But then you see, my Sisters, like all other Sisters from the beginning of the Church, you are not satisfied with victory. You have to fight with some temptation. You know it, each of you. It may be, I know it too. But you want to win that victory, and then to march off as if you had not fought at all. *That* you will never do. It is scarcely possible in earthly warfare, it is wholly impossible in heavenly. First of all, there are battles to be fought, where to be defeated is utter disgrace,

and to succeed is no glory; as when soldiers have to charge an unarmed mob in the street. Then, there are battles, where, as those brave men who took Savannah the other day, you have to plunge up to the waist in swamps and all kind of mud; and, as S. Bernard said, in a stronger expression than the mellifluous Doctor generally used, you come out victors, but draggled. But what does all that matter? What does it matter, to take a metaphor from that wonderful engraving, if, in a game of chess, the adversary keeps all his pieces, and you have lost all yours but one, so that you checkmate? Ah, my Sisters, defeats may not look, to the defeated, like strength; but they give strength; rise from them, and they help you; rise above them, and they encourage you. Always remember that noble saying of Peter the Great, when, by eight thousand Swedes, his own eighty thousand had been defeated: "Well; —they will conquer us, till they teach us to conquer them." And the event proved his words.

"And honour." Yes: but not this world's honour; so far, I mean, as worldly glory is concerned. You have heard the mediæval proverb: The masculine of honour is courage; and the feminine is purity. But you, in your work, must have both. A man—yes, and the LORD

chose, you know how, new wars—who means to make a good fight with any enemy, must have both offensive and defensive armour. So must you. Purity is the defensive:—of that I have spoken over and over again to you. Courage is the offensive. And there is one great enemy to that; called, as the devil likes to call things, by a most harmless, inoffensive name, making it out to be indeed the wretchedest little fox that ever tried to come into a vineyard; whereas it *may* be the singular beast that devours—devours? that roots up, the whole. It is what in other women might be called shyness; but in you, whose work is tending the sick, bodily or mentally, it is miserable cowardice. Do you remember the passage in the Revelation, where a certain sin is put even beyond that sin which will slay its ten thousands for the thousands of any other?—and what that sin is? Do you remember how, among those that are shut out from the Golden City, the *fearful*,—translate the word as you will into modern language,—are the first?

"She shall rejoice in time to come." Then it follows,—even here, does it not?—that she will not so much rejoice now. And remember that, in its literal sense, this was said by the mother of him who was the greatest and wisest

and richest monarch, till he fell from God, that the world ever knew. Our Solomon, the truer Prince of Peace, gives us no comfort about rejoicing now. What were His last words in the Upper Chamber? He had said, mind you, as I was telling you the other day, "Greater works than these shall ye do." But, for all that: nay, but *by* all that: "In the world ye shall have tribulation."

"She shall rejoice." And, naturally, with, or rather, before, joy, comes love. Shall I tell you, my Sisters, how I sometimes think of that ladder, which stood upon earth, and the top of it reached to heaven? How, if each of you could know each other, even, (and I say that *even* most emphatically), as I know you, how much more dearly you would love each other? And then think, what, if you knew each other even as you are known, not by a poor wretched earthly Priest, but by that Great High Priest, Who, sinless Himself, can yet be touched with a feeling of our infirmities? And from this House, stretch your thoughts to all, in our own Church, who are fighting the good fight; and from them to every other branch of the Church. Would it not be a perfect Heaven on earth, if we could only know, feel, sympathise with, the brave deeds that have been done this day, (but

what do I talk of this day—that have been done since I began to speak to you,) East, West, North, and South, for our dear LORD'S Name? Think how, in different parts of the world, at this very moment, it is deep night, morning twilight, forenoon, noon, afternoon, vespertime, growing dark. Each season bringing its own temptation; noon and midnight, light and darkness. Who shall tell us what glorious victories have been won in the dark or light, in crowd or solitude, during the last ten minutes? But, only be the Master's true followers, and you have your share in each.

"She *shall* rejoice." "Now no affliction for the present is joyous but grievous; nevertheless it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." And that very word, "for the present," means the light affliction that is but for a moment. The *afterwards:* can that be measured by time? The time to come: can we guess that even in thought? If I had not quoted it so often, I should once more remind you of what Venerable Bede says, in those glorious lessons for All Saints.

"In the Time to Come." That time which is timeless; which has no days or years; that evening when it shall be light; that City which,

all Temple, has no Temple; that place whereof it is written, and GOD grant us all some day to understand the meaning of the saying, "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

And now, &c.

SERMON XVII.*

WISDOM AND KINDNESS.

"*She openeth her mouth with wisdom; in her tongue is the law of kindness.*"—PROV. xxxi. 26.

IT is eight months, my Sisters, since I first began to speak to you about this chapter of Proverbs; and while I have been so speaking, how much more, (or, which GOD forbid, how much less,) like to that mystical type must each one of you have become in herself! This present verse, in one sense, is the very plainest of all; while yet, in another point of view, I do not know but that it may be thought deeper than any other.

"She openeth." And let us take it, as we have before, first of the Church. Two things. "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; in her tongue is the law of kindness." And there you have the great doctrine of Evangelical Counsels and Absolute Commands. It is wonderful, or would

* Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, 1865.

be wonderful but for the promise made her, how she has always steered her way clear between the two opposite errors of those who would teach that there is no higher place, nor dearer aim, no brighter crown, than that of ordinary Christians acting up to ordinary grace; no especial land of Goshen in that happy country of Egypt; and those who would teach, as so many earlier heretics did, that there is no lower place, no inferior reward, no possibility, or at least likelihood of, salvation, for those who will not obey, as laws, such things as that of which our dear Lord said, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it;" between those who on the one side teach, that she is *not* happier if she so abide; and those who would say on the other, she cannot be happy at all unless she so abide.

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom;" one branch of that wisdom which was hidden from even the chosen people of old; that there is the place and the name better than of sons and daughters; that there is the blessing when men shall revile you and persecute you, better than that old blessing of the basket and the store; that there is the "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." She, as S. Paul says, speaks wisdom among them that are perfect; that is,

among such as are trying to follow the counsels of perfection. But then, she has the kindness too, for those to whom grace has not been given to wish for such. So she does but follow her LORD's example, Who, if to one He said, "Go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, and follow Me;" to another it was, "Go to thine home and to thy friends."

Yes, here we have the two lives;—the secular and the religious, the lower and the higher,—plainly, if anywhere, in the Old Testament. But that is not the only, nor the deepest, nor the dearest sense of the words. "She openeth her mouth with wisdom." And what is Wisdom, save He, Who says of Himself: "The LORD possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old;" save Him of Whom the Apostle speaks: "CHRIST the Wisdom of GOD." She opens her mouth with Him indeed. She does so in the Book which she hands down to us, in its very first verse. "In the Beginning," (that is, in Him Who Himself calls Himself the Beginning,) "GOD created the heavens and the earth." And I think we all know how, when she opens her mouth to tell us of any of the Old Testament worthies; of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of

Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and the Prophets; she teaches us of Him, the True Wisdom, in each and all of them.

And in that sense too, my Sisters, you are bound to take those words on your lips; I was going to say, I should say, into your hearts. Here, or away from here, in home work or in cottage work, if you do not, so far as you may have the help from God, always begin to speak from that Wisdom, you cannot succeed; you will, in all likelihood, miserably fail. S. Paul has taught us, and we know it, I think, for ourselves, how like our warfare is to earthly warfare. Well, you know that the first thing that a general does, when he enters an enemy's country is to establish, what he calls, a base for his operations; that is, a safe place, where food, medicine, physicians, beasts of burden, ambulances, and hospitals are established. With that base he has to keep his line of march open; if the enemy cuts him off from that, he is usually ruined. There have been, in this world's warfare, marvellous instances when a general has, neglecting his base, pressed onward to, ay, and won, his goal. But never in spiritual warfare. If, my Sisters, you do not lean on Him Who is the Author, you will never attain to Him Who is the Finisher of your faith. So

far, the weapons of our warfare are not earthly, but spiritual.

All this is easy to say; as easy as true.

But now I come to the plainer meaning; and here, if I seem to speak unkindly, you must bear with me. About the faults of each of you, my Sisters, you know where it is not only my right, but my duty, to speak to you. But there you can, and ought to, explain what seems to make against you, according to that golden rule: Those who confess are bound neither to go beyond nor to stop short of the exact truth. But for me, or for any Priest, to take a text on purpose to be able to speak to you altogether about a fault, not universal, yet common; that to do, as S. Bernard says, "We have not so learned CHRIST." Yet, having a text given to me, putting itself into my hands, as it were, then it would be mere cowardice to shirk it. When that verse, in this very chapter, came so curiously on us: "She considereth a field, and buyeth it," just about the time when we knew we should buy our field, should I have passed over that?

Well, then, what I want to say is this: "In her tongue is the law of kindness." What our dear LORD did, what the Church, according to the grace given her does, that, you know it as

well as I, you ought to do. Now, do you, each and all of you, think that you can say that of yourselves, as regards your Sisters? If each of you, taking into consideration what the law of kindness means, could here, could now, could heartily and honestly say "Yes!" and that without deceiving herself: *I* can only say, Happy Sister, to have succeeded, where the best and brightest Sisterhoods in old times confessed themselves egregiously to fail.

But remember; the law of kindness means this: as in your Rule it is fully expressed. Never to find fault with, or to complain of, any of your Sisters, unless it is your absolute duty.

Never, even then, to do so, without having prayed for her first.

And never to be angry if any one else thinks it their duty to find fault with you, whether it cost them much or little. If much, ought you not to feel for them? if little, or nothing, ought you not to pity them more?

Is this to speak to you as if you were living in the world? S. Paul did not think so. We have the names of three Sisters in the New Testament. The first, Phœbe: but the other two, Euodias, or rather, as it should be written, Evodia, and Syntyche. And what does he, the great Apostle, to whom, above others, were the

lessons of the Religious Life entrusted, say concerning them? "I beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." So, where I am not referring, as he was, to any one in particular, may I not ask you all to have, in your tongues, the law of kindness?

And now, &c.

[*And here the series abruptly breaks off.*]

SERMON XVIII.*

THE FOUR PATTERNS.

"*There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in king's palaces.*"—PROV. XXX. 24, 28.

No one can read those verses without seeing at once that there is a greater depth of meaning in them than that which appears on the surface; that to them, as to so many others, that saying of S. Paul's applies, "Doth GOD take care for oxen?" or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: the shell indeed is in our hands when we have the mere words, but the kernel is not to be thus come at: there is a letter which killeth, and a spirit which giveth life. Yes: under these four people, little, but exceeding wise, he sets forth that Chris-

* Preached on the Sixth Sunday after Trinity, 1857, and Third Sunday in Lent, 1863: before a Retreat.

tian Life which is little in the eyes of the world, little in its beginnings, little to what, if it made the most of its graces, it might be: but, for all that, exceeding wise: wise enough to reckon with S. Paul, that the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us: wise enough for the choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: wise enough to say, It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him we shall also reign with Him: if we suffer we shall also reign with Him. But, above all others, types, my dear Sisters, of your life. You would be the first to tell me that it was little: little in comparison with what it might be, little in comparison with what, all your means of grace considered, it ought to be: little in numbers, little in the good opinion of the world: but for all that (they are His words Who cannot lie) it is exceeding wise: thus following His counsels as well as His commands: thus receiving that which He says all men cannot receive, save they to whom it is given: thus professing, I had rather be a doorkeeper in the House of my God than to dwell in the tents of the world: proclaiming your belief in the place and the name better than of sons and of daughters.

"The ants are a people not strong." And there, I am sure, you see a type of yourselves. It is wonderful, when we look at ourselves as well as others, knowing that the dearest desire of our hearts is to serve God above all things, feeling that, in our poor way, we are endeavouring to set Him always before us, then to see such weakness, and to feel that, as long as we are in this body of sin, it will not (for I must not say cannot) be otherwise. Looking at our wishes, looking at our strength, what marvellous power and malice does it show in our great enemy, what deadliness does it prove in the wound inflicted on man's nature in the Fall, that our dear Lord at the end of every day's self-examination—more especially at the end of every Confession—might address us as the king of old: "Is this thy kindness to thy Friend?" Ah, my dear Sisters, every time you kneel by me here, I am sure you might head those Confessions of yours with that text; and be sure that He, in His own loving voice, so gently, and yet so mournfully, would address you in them.

Well then: the people not strong, what do they do? They prepare their food in summer. A safe example for you. There will come the winter of temptation; the famine, not of bread and water, but of God's grace; the sad hours

when a Sister's life is a burden you can hardly bear; days, such as all GOD's servants have known, of deep depression, of walking in darkness and having no light; seasons when fearfulness and trembling shall come upon you, and an horrible dread shall overwhelm you. Against this, you must lay in strength during the season of your LORD's more especial presence: you must gather strength to-day, when from my hands you receive the Body and the Blood of the GOD of all strength; when you worship and fall down, and kneel before the LORD your Maker. That is your summer: for it is indeed then as though a breeze from the Eternal Summer passed by. Walk through the wilderness as Elijah did, you also must: walk through it, as the same Elijah did, in your own feebleness. But the cake and the cruse of water are by you: and you are invited, not indeed by the voice of an angel, but by the voice of your LORD Himself, speaking by His Priests, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for thee." It is well said then: "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer."

"The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." And one may as well observe that by *conies* we are to understand *mar-*

mots, and by the *spider* that little spotted lizard which runs over walls in the East, and even ceilings, with its back downward, clinging to them as a fly does. And the difference is more than seems at first sight, and has a lesson for us. It is true, rabbits burrow: but they burrow in the sand, not, as marmots, in the clefts of the rock. It is true, spiders may be said to take hold with their hands; but it is on the work of those hands, namely, their web: and they cling to that: not as the gecko, or lizard, on the very substance of the king's palace.

Oh, what a safe Rock that is! where only the true doves can find refuge, for the sole of whose foot there is no rest on the billows and storms of this troublesome world, on the wreck of earthly pleasures, and the mixed mass of cares, and fears, and hopes, which make up the life of others! Dearest Sisters, you know your way to that Rock, or it would be little use enough my speaking to you thus. You know the meaning of that invitation: "Come, My people, (and it is an emphasis of love by which our Lord calls *you* His people,) enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

"The conies are but a feeble folk." If the

experience of all those years has not taught you that, how can you ever hope to learn it? That, having done all, to stand; that, having received mercy, to faint not; to be perplexed, but not in despair; to be cast down, but not destroyed; at the best, to be faint, yet pursuing; that this is the utmost you are promised, the happiest state you have to look forward to in yourselves through this life.

And when you realize that, you begin to understand, and the more you realize it the more you understand, why it is that the Bride should say, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight." Under His shadow, mind; not in His Light. I know very well that this also has a very different sense: that as shadows are only types of the object by which they are cast, so it is a dear thing (and this I think we can all say from our hearts) not only to see, but take rest and comfort (*I sat down*) in His likeness in His Saints: His Passion reflected in theirs: His victory renewed in them: His valiant doings set forth in their wars and labours. But the other is the even dearer meaning: certainly that which has to do with you now. "I sat down under His Shadow." Yes: it is because in your own weakness you can have no greater comfort than to think of, to look to, to lay hold on His

weakness, that, therefore, you would be where you can see it best, at the foot of the Cross: and there indeed sit with great delight; the delight of the weary, and waysore, and heated traveller through a weary land, seated under the shadow of a great Rock: or, if you prefer it, under the fresh coolness of that Tree of Life that stretcheth out her branches to the sea, the sea of glass before the Throne, and her boughs unto the river of death. There, even in this world, the weary are at rest. There is that glorious example of weakness, more sublime than the most divine strength; the weakness which, instead of making the worlds with one word at creation, spake seven in the mystery of redemption:—the weakness which, instead of breaking up the fountains of the great deep and opening the windows of heaven, vouchsafed to say, I thirst:—the weakness which, instead of stretching out the Hands to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease, extended them to be fettered for ever: the weakness of that love which, unable in any other way, as so fast bound to the Cross, as saying, "I am so fast in prison that I cannot get forth," nevertheless complying with the Bride's request, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His Mouth," bowed His Head to give

her that farewell kiss before He gave up the Ghost.

This then is the shadow: for the light, that poor trembling one must wait, till, as S. Bernard says, it glows forth from that blessed region of peace, that blessed country of all delights, for which we sigh out of this vale of misery: where is wisdom without any ignorance; where is memory without any forgetfulness: where is understanding without any error; where is strength without any weakness. Of a verity, blessed are they, O LORD, that dwell in Thy House: they shall be alway praising Thee: in that Kingdom which is pledged, promised, manifested, enjoyed: pledged in predestination: promised in vocation: manifested in justification: enjoyed in glorification.

I have not, my Sisters, though it may have seemed so, wandered from the text. For, just as the Bride sits under that Tree by the contemplation of that weakness, to comfort her own weakness, so here the feeble conies enter the rock to supply, by its strength, their own feebleness. At all times, in one sense, my Sisters, in that Rock, in its pierced clefts, GOD grant you may be: but in a more especial sense you are now called, for a short while, to take up your abode in CHRIST. And this too: the

strength you have expended in active work now ought to be renewed and repaired: from the battle of every-day contest with the world here, for a while, you are safe. When you come out of Retreat, something of that strength should remain with you; something should distinguish you, even as the light that marked the face of Moses after he had come down from *his* rock; something of that, "And *thou* also wast with Jesus of Nazareth."

But the feebler the conies are, the more their enemies will try to prevent their finding the refuge they seek. I have often, my Sisters, noticed how, at any especial time when God's servants would more especially serve Him, the malice of Satan throws some especial hindrance in the way. So now I ask all of you to be on your guard. I should not at all wonder if, this very afternoon, he should endeavour to make some one or more of you, if not exactly unfit to enter the Retreat, at least to cause you to begin it with ruffled tempers; or the consciousness of having spoken unkind words, or some worldly distraction weighing on your mind. And so I have just as little doubt that, when it is over, and especially under the peculiar circumstances that follow, he should in more than one way try to snatch away all the good.

You may have noticed (I often have) how, after First Confession or First Communion, something happens to irritate, or to worry, or to distract: a very old and favourite device of the ancient enemy.

But now, how is this? "The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." Can there be more than one Rock? Are we sometimes to take refuge here, sometimes elsewhere? Is He to be our refuge in great trials, whereas in smaller troubles we can find a refuge for ourselves? God forbid! But in this there is a great mystery. He is the common Rock of all His people: and so far He is one. But He belongs as much to each as if He were theirs alone, as if they only had access to Him, as if all His strength, and comfort, and help were theirs and none's else. And so far He may be *rocks:* as the Prophet says in another place: "His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks." Yes: this is that Rock of which it is written: "Their rock is not as our Rock; our enemies themselves being judges."

"The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands." You will notice that in all these types of Christian life he speaks of the aggregate, not of the individual. The ants

are a *people* not strong: the conies are a feeble *folk:* the locusts go forth by *bands.* Herein he sets forth to us the Communion of Saints; that it is not good for man to be alone; that it is to the two or three gathered together, that Christ has promised His more especial presence: that we are but units in the great multitude that no man can number, travelling through the wilderness, bound to the everlasting Temple of God in Jerusalem, the Vision of Peace. But why is it written, "'They have no king?" What would happen to us if this were so? If that title once set up over the Cross were not true to this day. If He Who in the hour of His humiliation answered the question, "Art Thou a King then?" with those words, "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice;" if He Who in death had the triumphal inscription over Him, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews:" if He Who in His Ascension was greeted with that song of victory, "Who is the King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle;" if He were not our most dear and loving King still; if we were not enrolled as His subjects, fighting under His banner, seek-

ing some day to sit at His table, always breathing that prayer toH im, "LORD, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." "*The locusts have no king*:" of us it is written, "The Holy One of Israel *is* our King." What shall we say then to such a type? It is as though the wise man would teach us how we walk by faith, and not by sight. The locusts, who have no king nor leader, go on straight forward, overleaping all obstacles, bearing on in one straight line, never turned aside by any impediment, guided only by that instinct which none else can see, pressing forward by a rule which none else can know. And so of our King. The world seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him. The world will not have this Man to reign over them, and cannot recognise Him as reigning over us. The world has no king but Cæsar. The world always says that which was said by the highest authority in the kingdom but a few nights since, "Statute Law is to over-ride all private conscience." To it, then, it does seem as if we had no king. He that was born in Bethlehem is too humble for that world: He of Whom it was said, "Have any of the Pharisees believed on Him?" is too ignoble for its obedience: He that suffered His Agony in Gethsemane, is too stern a witness against its self-

indulgence. But as for us, my dearest Sisters, and our house, we *will* serve the Lord. And see, with this clue of the wise man, how noble a prophecy is that of Joel, if applied to the Church, as it has been, as we shall see it again more perfectly, as in some measure we do see it, aggressive on a wicked world: how of all that are fighting in her ranks, it is said: "They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded."

So that it is well and truly said: "The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands."

And now we come to that most beautiful and touching of all parables: "The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in king's palaces."

If then you have the love which admits you into the palace, you have also the firm grasp which is needed to keep you there. In the first type, you have your weakness taking shelter in His strength: here you have the strength He has given you employing itself in clinging to Him. In the Septuagint, which, as

you know, often differs very widely from the Hebrew, there is something else: "The lizard firmly grasping with his hands, and being easily taken, is in kings' palaces." That is, I suppose, if she were not firmly to cling to the wall or the ceiling, but to allow herself to come within reach of hand, nothing would be easier than to take her and fling her away. So see. In the King's House now, whether in its lowest sense, the secular life of the Church, or in a higher meaning, its religious life, or in a yet higher signification still, such a Retreat as you are now about to enter, there is no such thing as safety; leave hold of your grasp, and where are you? No: we must wait for that other House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; we must wait for what the schoolmen call the blessed necessity of not sinning, before that promise can be fulfilled, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the House of My God, and he shall go no more out." Contrast the two; the poor lizard clinging with all her might to wall or ceiling, trembling lest she should relax her hold, and be swept off from the Royal Dwelling: the pillar firmly planted on the Rock, bearing up and borne up by the Temple: supporting and supported; everlasting as that Temple is everlasting. Surely, if one grace is

more to be prayed for than another, by all CHRIST'S servants, but by Sisters especially, it is the last, best crowning grace of perseverance. I know not whether to me that speech is more melancholy or more terrible, which so completely made the crowning glory of the next world, to be the crowning delusion of this; that of Cromwell on his death-bed to his chaplain, his conscience beginning to tremble. "Is it certain, doctor, is it positively *certain*, that the elect cannot fall away?" "Certain that they cannot fall away either finally or fatally." "Then I *must* be saved: for I know that I was once in grace."

But the happy change from the King's House here to the King's Mansion above, is set forth in a lovely little ceremony, in Celebration: but it is one so little, that perhaps none of you have ever noticed it. When the Priest makes the Offertory of the Bread, he raises his eyes, one instant, to Heaven at the beginning of the prayer, and then casts them down till the end. But when he makes the Offertory of the Chalice, he raises them at the commencement of that prayer, and keeps them raised till its conclusion. Why is this? Because in the Bread, our dear LORD is signified, as it were, by Himself; not finally united to His people, as He is now: and though we

may raise our thoughts and hopes to our inheritance, we are liable to be cast out from it for ever. But in the oblation of the Chalice, the case is different: it contains, not wine only, but water: thereby signifying the union between our LORD and His own ones; when all is safe for ever;—when there is the glorious impossibility of sinning; when that which GOD hath joined together, sin can never, never, never again put asunder.

In the three former instances, there is something said in disparagement of the hope of a Christian life. The ants are not strong: the conies are feeble: the locusts have no king: but not one such word here. And why? Because those verses apply to our militant state, when there is so much of weakness, so much of vacillation, so much of irresolution, so much of sin. But this refers principally and in the first place to that more blessed time when "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem:" when the King,—the King no longer crowned with thorns, but radiant in His glory: the King no longer despised and rejected of men, but the joy of the Angels, and the worship of the Blessed: the King Who by His death has acquired to Himself the peculiar people,—shall have brought you, dearest Sisters, into His chambers. He, Who in the days of His humi-

liation called Himself a worm and no man. He sets us forth in all the deformity that sin has occasioned to our nature by the likeness of this insect. And yet, "The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces."

Doubt not therefore, my dearest Sisters, but earnestly believe, that, however polluted are your best works, however much sin strives to exert the dominion over you, however much in yourselves you are impure, and He of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, however sad are your falls and mistakes: doubt not but that He will accept you; doubt not but that He is preparing a place for you; doubt not but that He desires to set you by Him for ever and ever. Only of that place you must take hold with your hands. I can warn you and can encourage you; I can pray for you and with you; I can sometimes show you the way to that glorious Palace; but how can any Priest take hold of it for you? It will require all your strength put forth, all your patience exerted: it will require the effort of many and many an hour, much fatigue, much perseverance: but then, what at the end?

Yes: and what by the way too? For you may be in the King's Palace here: may be? over and over again, you are. Where the King is, that is His Palace here. O gracious and humble

King that in a few moments will take up His abode even in this poor Oratory! That will vouchsafe to tabernacle here for awhile! That will vouchsafe to receive, in His own presence, your prayers and praises! It matters not that the world may think you foolish: here is your exceeding wisdom; it matters not that Satan may know you to be weak: here is your exceeding strength; it matters not that you may have been polluted by sin: here is your taking hold with the hands, and abiding in the King's Palace. Only see that, while you abide there, your love be such as theirs should be, who remember that large upper room on Mount Sion where He first gave His last and best gift: as theirs should be, who have so frequent a share in that blessing, beyond which He has none to give: as theirs should be, who profess to be wholly given up to their Beloved. This is only the vestibule of that Palace, dear Sisters, to which, as I hope, you are steadily approaching: this presence is but darkness compared with that eternal light which is the portion of the glorified. It is your preparation for that, as theirs was of old in the outer courts of Shushan the palace: it is designed to present you to your King, when He shall call for you, perfectly His Own, perfectly pure, perfectly glorious;

not having spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. Oh! if anything I have ever said, or ever may say, should but help you one step forward, be it even but one poor inch towards that unspeakable happiness, could any words express my joy in the Day of Christ, that I had not run in vain, neither laboured in vain?

And now, &c.

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